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**CLASS OF 1861**









# CIVIL WAR PAPERS

READ BEFORE THE COMMANDERY  
OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,  
MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL  
LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES.

VOLUME I.



BOSTON:  
PRINTED FOR THE COMMANDERY  
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BOSTON, U. S. A.

## PREFACE

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THE Massachusetts Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion on November 2nd, 1892, appointed a Committee on History, and since January 1893, papers on the Civil War have been prepared and read by the companions, first at special meetings called for that purpose, subsequently during the hour preceding the regular monthly meeting.

November 4th, 1896, the Board of Officers voted to call the regular meetings of the Commandery at 5.30 o'clock P.M., to listen first to the reading of the papers announced by the Committee on History.

On April 4th, 1900,

Lieutenant Colonel FRANCIS S. HESSELTINE, Chairman Committee on History,

Captain WILMON W. BLACKMAR, Junior Vice Commander,

Major EDWARD T. BOUVÉ, Member of Council and of Committee on History,

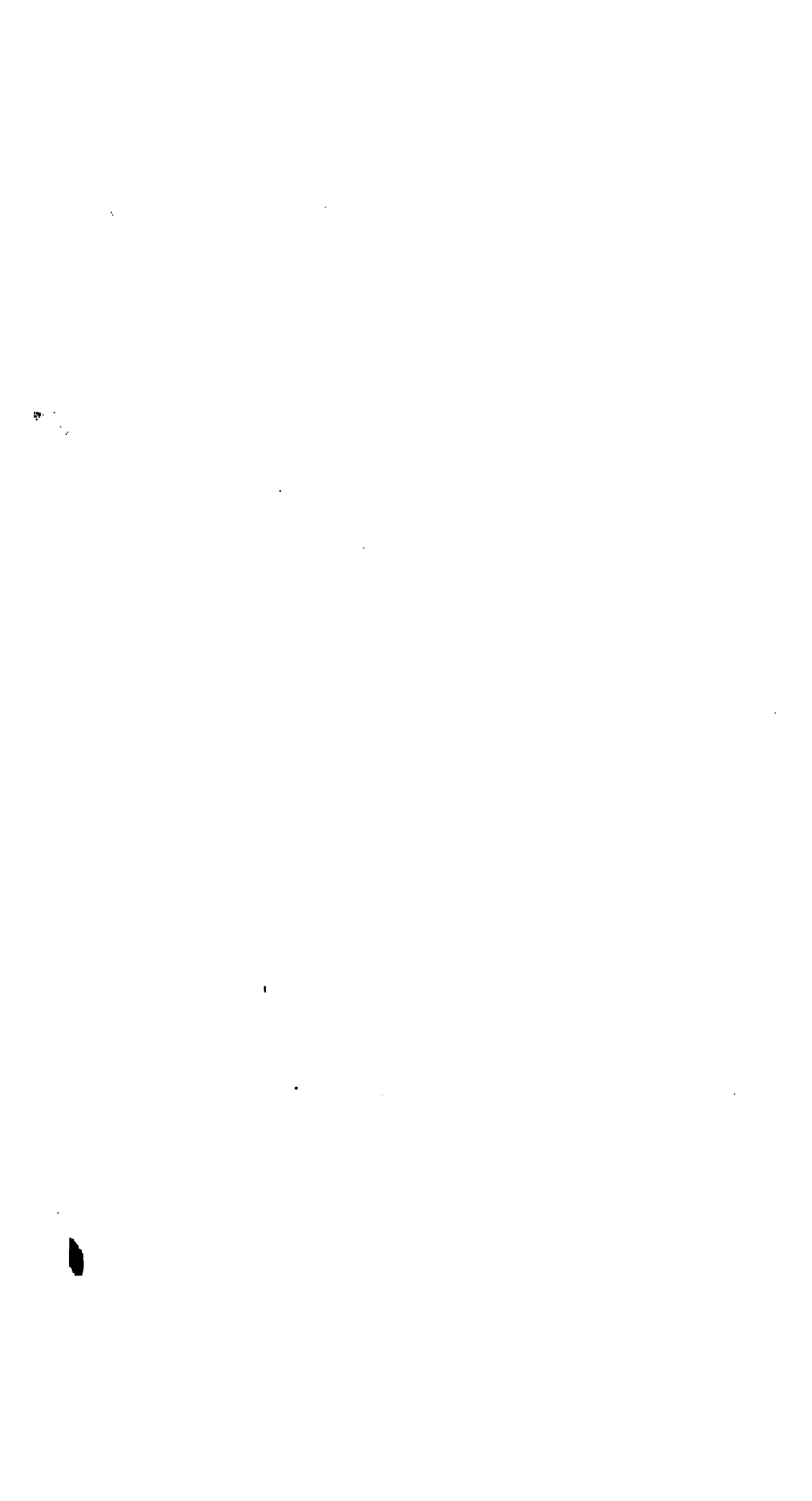
Lieutenant Colonel SAMUEL A. DRAKE,

Lieutenant CHARLES H. PORTER, Librarian,

were appointed a committee to publish a volume of the papers which have been read before the Commandery. A few of the papers had been prepared for and published by the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, others were reserved by the companions who furnished them.

From those at their disposal the committee have selected the papers here published, considering solely variety and interest of subjects and the honor of the Commandery of Massachusetts.

THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATION.



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## MY FIRST AND LAST BATTLE



# MY FIRST AND LAST BATTLE

BY

REVEREND EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.,

CHAPLAIN OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMANDERY.

FOR three years of the Civil War I had been connected with the Sanitary Commission of Massachusetts and of the United States. The Commission had it for its duty to keep the people at home in touch with the army. It tried to keep alive the enthusiasm of the people for the soldiers, and it tried to make the soldiers understand that they were not forgotten by the nation.

In the correspondence and other work connected with the Sanitary, I had occasion to visit Fort Monroe in the spring of 1864, and was most cordially and courteously received there by General Butler. I was his guest at his house, and, with regard to some interesting things in the movements of the war, I learned a great deal which was very curious from him. When we parted I said to him: "It will not be long before you will see me again. I shall be drafted some day, and as I present arms to you, as a sentinel, you will remember your old guest." He asked if I could not stay then, and said he would put me to work. But I had home duties in hand.

I was not surprised, therefore, when, after General Butler, by a well-planned movement, had taken up his position at Bermuda Hundred, where the Appomattox and James Rivers join each other, to receive a telegram from Shaffer, his chief of staff, saying simply: "Come on at once. We are more successful than our best hopes."

At that time, the beginning of May, 1864, the chances were good for the combined armies going, separately or together, into Richmond. Alas, it was a year before this happened! But I at once made arrangements to join the headquarters staff, with which I was now intimate, and I went on with a fortnight's leave of absence from my work at home.

As I passed through Washington, where we were all at home in the war, I went to the War Department, where the adjutant-general, Townsend, was an old schoolmate of mine. I was no stranger there then, and so it happened that he gave me a dispatch for General Butler. This elevated me at once in the esteem of all chiefs of transportation, giving me I do not know how much power, but great prestige whenever I needed it. I went down to Fort Monroe at once, where I found only one or two of the gentlemen of the staff, chafing because they were not at the front; and on the government steamer of the next day I went up to Bermuda Hundred.

We were rather more than halfway up when we were arrested for a little by the sound of firing on the shore. It proved that this was one of the days when Fitzhugh Lee had attempted to cut off General Butler's river communications. He had attacked the field works which we had on the south side of the river. As it happened, some of these works were held by negroes recruited in Virginia, and this was one of the earlier trials of those troops. After a little delay on this account, we pressed on, and just about at nightfall arrived at the crowded water-front of Bermuda Hundred. The whole army of 25,000 men had arrived there suddenly a fortnight before, as if it had fallen from the skies. In that time wharves and landing-places had been improvised, with marvelous rapidity; and although there was endless confusion, still things seemed to go forward with the kind of energy which marks the work of a well-disciplined army.

For me, I was as ignorant as a freshman is on entering college of what I was to do. I knew that General Butler and

his staff were six or seven miles away, I knew that night was falling, and I did not know how I was to go to him. Fortunately for me, as I thought, there was on the boat a member of his staff with whom I had some acquaintance, and I relied upon him to help me through. When we landed, however, he was out of the way, and I could not find him. I suspected that he did not care to embarrass himself with a civilian, and was intentionally keeping out of sight. I think so still.

I therefore did what I always do in life — struck as high as I could. I said to the sentinel that I was a bearer of dispatches, and asked him the way to the headquarters of the commander of that post. I wish I remembered this gentleman's name, so well did he illustrate the courtesy and promptness of a man in command. He said at once that his own orderly should go with me to General Butler; that he would lend me his own horse; and would send my valise on the ambulance the next morning. So the horse was saddled, and about the time when it became quite dark, the soldier and I started on our way.

He knew no more of the way than I did, and a very bad way it was. I made my first acquaintance with the sacred soil of Virginia then and there. We lost ourselves sometimes, and then we found ourselves, the greater part of the road being the worst possible country road, all cut to pieces by the heavy army work, through woods, not of large trees, which were close enough on both sides to darken the passage. It was nine o'clock or later when we saw the welcome sight of the headquarters camp fires.

We rode up and I jumped from my horse to shake hands with General Butler, Colonel Shaffer, and the other gentlemen. They asked instantly how we had passed the batteries. I told the story, and General Butler, who was always effusively polite, and who to his other gracious ways added exquisite facility in flattery, said to me: "We are greatly obliged to you, Mr. Hale. I have been very anxious for two or three hours. I was afraid my dispatches were cut off." I had already handed to him the

utterly unimportant letter from the War Department, which had been my talisman thus far.

Then and there I first heard soldiers talk of what had been done and what had not been done in that day. I knew beforehand that, in the push toward Richmond, we had been flung back at Fort Darling. I did not know, till I came there, exactly how the command was impressed by this delay. But in the headquarters circle I found nothing but confidence, and I very soon saw that I was to understand that we should have taken Richmond, but for the heavy fog of the day of battle and some other infelicities. I think now that this is probably true.

The fires were kept burning, and we sat and chatted there hour after hour. When we had been there perhaps two hours, up came my dilatory military friend of the general's staff, and with sufficient profanity exorcised the roads over which he had ridden. He had never been there before. General Butler heard him through, and then said: "But here is Mr. Hale, who has been here two hours." The soldier turned on me, a little crestfallen, all the other members of the staff sufficiently amused, and he asked me with another oath, how I found the way. I said, "We followed the telegraph wire;" and from that day I was rather a favorite with the staff for this civilian snub on a gentleman who was not a favorite.

Meanwhile, somebody had been ordered to pitch a tent for me, and about eleven o'clock, I suppose, I went to bed in my new quarters. I had slept an hour, however, as it proved, when I was awakened by the firing of cannon. I had never heard such firing; as it proved afterward, they were the heaviest guns which I have ever heard in my life. Of course I wanted to jump up, but I said to myself: "It will seem very green if I walk out on the first sound of firing. I suppose this is what I came to the front for. If they want me they will call me, and I shall hear firing enough before I have done." So I turned over and tried to go to sleep—did go to sleep—and was awakened again by louder and louder firing. All this lasted,

I suppose, perhaps an hour, perhaps two. Then all was still, and I went to sleep for the night.

You are awakened in camp, if you are at a major-general's, by the bugles of his cavalry escort, and the next morning I heard their reveille, also for the first time. I washed myself, was already dressed, of course, and in a little time an orderly told me that breakfast was ready. I met at breakfast Captain Laurie, a fine old officer of the navy, whom I had known slightly in Boston. He said to me, "And how did you like our firing last night, Mr. Hale?" I said, that to me, as a civilian, it seemed very loud, but I supposed that that was what I had come to the war for, and I did not get up from my bed. Laurie answered, as if he would rebuke me for my ignorance: "I have been in the service for thirty-nine years, and I never heard such firing before." I found then, for the first time, that the whole staff had been up and on horseback, had been at the front to try to find out what this firing was, and had returned almost as much perplexed as they went.

It was thus that it happened to me that I spent my first and last battle in bed.

I was acting on the principle of doing the duty which came next my hand, and obeying all orders which were given to me. I had not run away; I was pleased with that. And if I had not personally received the surrender of three or four battle-flags, that was my misfortune.

I had occasion afterward to hear, not to say report, much of the testimony, and to read all the rest of it, which related to this remarkable battle. If you will read the history of the time, as told in the Richmond newspapers and those of New York City, and will put them together, you will learn that on that night a reconnoissance was sent out from our lines into the tangled shrubbery which separated our newly built works from those of the rebels. You will learn that the rebel guns mowed down these columns as corn is mowed down before a tempest. Or, if you read a Northern newspaper, you will learn that a cer-

tain column of the rebel troops, who were named, were worse than decimated by similar artillery from our works.

Every word of this was entirely false. In fact, there was a very heavy cannonading from the newly erected works on both sides. As I have said, it lasted an hour or two. Much of it on our side was from heavy guns, which had been landed from the navy to strengthen the battery which we had near the river. But as the result of it, there was never any evidence that a rabbit was scratched. Certainly no drop of human blood was shed in that encounter of giants.

How it happened so late in the evening, I do not know. But what happened was this: A party of ladies had been entertained on board one of our ships of war. As they left, an officer, with the gallantry of his profession, asked one of the ladies if she would like to see how a gun was fired, and to do pleasure to her, he fired one of the guns in the darkness. At that moment everything was on the *qui vive* ashore, and our land-battery men, eager for something to do, finding that one shot was fired, thought that another had better be fired, and continued the firing. This started the successive artillerists for nearly a mile, as our works ran up into the country toward the Appomattox River, and not to be belated or accused of sleepiness, they began firing in turn. Of course this roused the equally ready artillerists on the rebel side and they fired, I suppose, at the flashes which they saw a mile or two away. And this was the famous cannonade which made the whole of my first battle.

The naval officers were dreadfully mortified, our gentlemen at headquarters were indignant beyond account, and the thing almost came to courts martial and courts of inquiry. But it was wisely thought better to leave the record of it to be made at the end of thirty years by the only person who was at all concerned, who spent the hours of the battle in his bed under canvas.

## THE FIRST CRUISE OF THE KEARSARGE



# THE FIRST CRUISE OF THE KEARSARGE

BY

COMPANION WILLIAM H. BADLAM,

SECOND ASSISTANT ENGINEER, U.S.N.

ON the 5th day of February, 1862, the Sloop-of-War *Kearsarge*, commanded by Captain Charles W. Pickering, sailed from Portsmouth Navy Yard down the Piscataqua river, past the Isles of Shoals, out to sea.

The course was set to the southward and eastward, and in a short time we ran into the Gulf Stream, and came into rough weather, which lasted for three days, making things wet and uncomfortable. Our hatch combings were low, and the seas that came aboard would strike them and pour down the hatches, until it became necessary to batten down, and put on the storm hoods. The captain's gig was swept out of the davits by a large sea, and lost overboard.

After this experience we proceeded on our way to Madeira, and had fairly good weather. We lay at anchor, at Funchal, two or three days, and then proceeded to Cadiz, Spain, where, on our arrival, we learned that the Confederate Steamer *Sumter* was anchored under the guns of Gibraltar, guarded by the United States Steamer *Tuscarora*, which was lying at anchor in the port of Algesiras, a Spanish town across the bay from Gibraltar.

We relieved the *Tuscarora* and kept a sharp lookout on the *Sumter* for some months, ready to go out in case she made a move. By lying in Spanish waters we were free to go out without waiting twenty-four hours after the *Sumter* had departed, which we should have been obliged to do, if we had lain at Gibraltar, in English waters.

In the latter part of the summer of 1862, we spent considerable time in the Atlantic waters around the Azores, looking for the *Alabama*, which had been reported as destroying American whalers in that vicinity. Not finding the *Alabama*, we returned to watch the *Sumter*, until she was finally sold and all hands left her.

The winter of 1862-1863 was spent at La Carraca, Spain, at the Spanish Navy Yard, repairing our stern bearing, which had worn down to such an extent that it was not safe to continue cruising under steam. It took from the 1st of December, 1862, until the middle of March, 1863, to have the work finished, a job that ought not to have taken more than three weeks at the longest, had it been done in the United States.

On April 8th, 1863, Captain Pickering and our Executive Officer were relieved by Captain John A. Winslow, and Lieutenant Commander James S. Thornton. Soon after this change of officers, and while lying at anchor in the bay of Horta, Fayal, about May 1st the plan of protecting the engines and boilers, with the spare cables hung in bights over the sides, as suggested by Lieutenant Commander Thornton, was decided upon. The engineers' department made the iron work, and the ship's carpenter hung the chains. After the chains were hung, the whole surface was covered with inch boards to prevent the sea from washing it adrift, some parts being lashed together only with marline; the ends and bottom being finished with beveled pieces so as not to reduce our speed. After six days' work, we had the job completed, and on painting the new wood covering, the change was scarcely distinguishable at a short distance.

The *Kearsarge* was a fast steamer for those days, and had made an average of thirteen and a half knots with moderate head wind and sea.

On September 7th, 1863, we left Madeira for the English Channel, touching at Lisbon, Portugal, and Ferrol, Spain. Here we heard that the Confederate Steamer *Florida* was at Brest, France. We immediately proceeded there, looking in at

Bordeaux, where two ironclad Rams were being built for the Confederates. We found the *Florida* at Brest, where we remained lying off and on for about five months. The *Florida* was a two funnel steamer, a little smaller than the *Alabama*, and carried eight rifled guns.

October 30th, we heard that the *Georgia* was off the coast of Ireland. We proceeded to Queenstown in a very severe gale, but found that she had gone to Cherbourg. Back again we went to Brest, to continue our watch on the *Florida*.

December 5th, we started for Queenstown again, this time to land some stowaways that had come aboard when there before. These stowaways were the cause of considerable diplomatic correspondence, and we returned them to their native soil as soon as we dared to leave the *Florida*, touching at Cherbourg and at Plymouth on our return to Brest.

On January 17th, 1864, being short of coal and stores, we were obliged to go to Cadiz to replenish, and returned on the 18th of February to find that the *Florida* had departed during our absence. It was rather a difficult task for one vessel to blockade four or five of the enemy's cruisers, from one to six hundred miles apart.

In the English Channel we performed considerable police duty, visiting ports in England, Ireland, France, Belgium, and Holland, looking after the *Rappahannock*, *Georgia*, and other vessels fitting out for the Confederate Government, as fast as we heard of their whereabouts.

April 17th, when going into the port of Ostend, Belgium, under charge of a pilot, through his stupidity we were run on the pier, a massive granite structure, where we hung for twelve hours before we could get off. We at first thought it was premeditated, but finally came to the conclusion that it was through the pilot's ignorance. We came off with only the loss of a few sheets of copper from our bottom.

That the reader may realize what a scourge the *Alabama* was to American Commerce, I will proceed to follow her de-

structive course from her departure from England. In October 1861, the Confederate Agents in England made a contract with the Lairds, of Liverpool, to build a war vessel. In May 1862, the vessel was launched and called the "290," this being the 290th vessel built by that firm. She cost \$255,000. On July 29th, 1862, the "290" was finished, and sailed from Birkenhead, out of the Mersey river, ostensibly for a trial trip, with a large party of ladies and gentlemen aboard, and anchored in Moelfra Bay. Here a tug met her, took off the guests and landed them on shore, when the "290" proceeded on her voyage, passing around the north coast of Ireland, then set her course for the Island of Terceira, one of the Azores, where she arrived on the 10th of August. In the diary of one of the officers of the *Alabama*, he says: "No sooner had our departure become known than the United States Steamer *Tuscarora* received news of it through the American Consul at Liverpool. Every exertion was made by her Commander to seize us, but without avail, for by the time the *Tuscarora* arrived in Moelfra Bay, we had been gone two days."

On the 18th of August the English barque *Agrippina* arrived at Terceira, having on board guns, ammunition, coal, stores, etc., for the "290," which cargo was transferred aboard. On the 20th, the English steamer *Bahama* arrived, with Captain Raphael Semmes and other officers of the Confederate Navy as passengers. More guns and stores were transferred from her to the "290." On Sunday, August 24th, the "290" was put into commission and named the *Alabama* by the authority of the Confederate States Government.

About eighty men were shipped from the three vessels, and formed the nucleus of the crew until others could be found willing to sign the articles. The *Alabama* was built for great speed, and had a hoisting propeller, so that under sail alone, she could cruise about, thus economizing fuel, which was a very important item with her.

On September 5th, the eleventh day after going into com-

mission, the *Alabama* captured her first prize, a whaling ship, which was burned.

After cruising about the Azores for some days, the *Alabama's* course was shaped toward New York, capturing on her way twenty vessels. Then steering in a southerly direction toward Martinique, she captured two more vessels previous to her arrival there on the 18th of November.

She was here blockaded by the United States Steamer *San Jacinto*, but escaped out of the harbor, at night, on the next day, the 19th. — The *Alabama* went from Martinique to the southward to the Island of Blanquilla, arriving there on the 21st, where she met her store ship, the *Agrippina*, from which vessel she took coal and stores.

After coaling and taking on stores, the *Alabama* headed northward, going through the Mona Passage, to the north of Hayti, capturing two more vessels; thence passing through the Windward Passage she captured and ransomed the Pacific mail steamer *Ariel*, bound from New York to Aspinwall. After lying in the track of the mail steamers for a few days, the *Alabama* went to the Arcas Rocks, where she took on more coal from the *Agrippina*, which was there waiting for her. The Confederate cruiser finished taking coal on January 5th, 1863, and hoisted anchor.

From the mails captured on the *Ariel*, Semmes obtained the information that an expedition was about to leave New York to make an attack on Galveston, Texas. Semmes had calculated the time for the arrival of the transports at Galveston, and was intending to surprise them at night, while lying at anchor, and then to steam through the fleet, pouring in shot and shell from both batteries as he went. But on Sunday, January 11th, when he approached the anchorage, instead of finding the transports there, five vessels of war were made out. Soon one of them was reported to be standing out towards the *Alabama*, and after dark came up with her. Answering her hail, the *Alabama* replied, "Her Britannic Majesty's Steamer *Petrel*. What ves-

sel is that ?" and the answer came back — "The United States Steamer *Hatteras*." At the same moment Semmes replied, "This is the Confederate Steamer *Alabama*," and before the *Hatteras* had fully heard, a broadside from the *Alabama's* star-board battery was given her at a distance of only fifty or sixty yards.

After twelve or fifteen minutes of rapid firing from both vessels, the *Hatteras* was reported to be sinking, and the firing ceased. Semmes lowered his boats, and soon after, the *Hatteras* went down stern first. The officers and crew were taken aboard the *Alabama*, and paroled at Port Royal, Jamaica. The *Hatteras*, commanded by Lieutenant Commander Blake, was a small iron, side-wheel gunboat, formerly a merchant vessel, and carried a very light battery.

After repairing and coaling ship at Port Royal, the *Alabama* proceeded to the eastward, in the track of vessels bound to and from the East Indies, the Pacific and the United States, capturing seven vessels. She then headed in a southerly direction and along the coast of Brazil, touching at Fernando de Noronha, capturing seven vessels, one of which, the *Louisa Hatch*, was loaded with one thousand tons of coal. This was a very fortunate capture for the *Alabama*, as she was short of fuel.

Semmes had ordered the *Agrippina* to meet him here, so that he might fill up with coal and stores, but he decided to hold on to the *Hatch* until he made sure that the *Agrippina* had arrived. On entering the harbor he did not find the *Agrippina* there, and had the *Hatch* brought in, hauled alongside, and filled his bunkers from her. Just after finishing taking coal, two American vessels were sighted in the offing. The *Alabama* got up steam and went out to them. They proved to be two American whalers, one of which was burned and the other brought in to anchor.

Semmes waited a few days longer for the *Agrippina*, but she not arriving, he went out, taking his prizes with him, and

burnt them off the island. On the *Alabama's* way from there to Bahia, she captured four vessels.

After leaving Bahia, she proceeded in a northeasterly direction, then headed south, to a little south of Rio de Janeiro, capturing seven vessels, one of which, the barque *Conrad*, was commissioned as the *Tuscaloosa*, and officered as a tender to the *Alabama*. From here her course was set to the eastward for the Cape of Good Hope, capturing a vessel *en route*. On July 29th, she anchored in Saldanha Bay. After remaining at this port one week, she put to sea, and captured the bark *Sea Bride*. She next went to Table Bay, and then to Simons Bay, where she captured, in sight of the town as she went in, a bark named the *Martha Wenzell*. It was finally decided that this prize was inside the three mile line, and she was released.

On the 28th of August, the *Alabama* anchored at Angra Piquina, where the prize, *Sea Bride*, was sold. It was about September 25th, when the *Alabama* left the Cape for a cruise still farther to the eastward. After steering south for a short distance her course was set for the Straits of Sunda, by the way of St. Paul's Island. At the entrance of the Straits she captured a vessel, and after passing through them she captured two more. The *Alabama* next sailed as far as the Island of Condor in Siam, arriving at Singapore on December 21st, 1863. In the Straits of Malacca she captured three vessels, and off the coast of India, another.

Passing westward, toward the coast of Africa, the Confederate ship passed through the Mozambique Channel, to the Cape of Good Hope, thence up towards St. Helena, west, to the coast of Brazil, then northerly again, capturing the *Rockingham* April 23d, and the *Tycoon* on April 27th. She continued her course to the northward, passed the Azores, then stood away to the northeast for the English Channel, and on the 11th day of June, 1864, arrived at Cherbourg, France, having cruised less than two years. Of the sixty-six vessels captured by the *Alabama*, fifty-two were burned, ten released on bond, the *Hatteras*

sunk in action, the *Conrad* commissioned as a Confederate tender to the *Alabama*, one was sold, and one released as an unlawful capture.

The damage inflicted on American shipping by the Confederate cruisers, which were allowed to be fitted out in England, cost the English government fifteen million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$15,500,000) which sum was paid to the United States in settlement of the so-called *Alabama* claims.

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ON Sunday afternoon, June 12, 1864, while the *Kearsarge* was lying at anchor in the Scheldt, off Flushing, Holland, a gun was fired from on board, and the signal was hoisted for everybody ashore belonging to the ship to return, at once ; orders were also given to spread the fires, and to get up steam preparatory to getting under way. The anchor was hoisted and we proceeded to sea, when Captain Winslow called all hands to muster on the quarter deck, and informed them that he had received a telegram from Mr. Dayton, the American Minister at Paris, that the *Alabama* was in the harbor of Cherbourg, where we were going, and he hoped to have the opportunity of meeting her, and of being able to capture or destroy her.

This information was received with three rousing cheers from the crew, and the men's eyes glistened with excitement and animation, at the prospect of having a chance to show of what they were made. They were all eager for the fray.

On the way to Cherbourg, the crew were occupied in getting swords and cutlasses sharp, and ready for action ; the grindstones being kept in constant use. On the 14th of June we steamed into the harbor of Cherbourg at the eastern entrance, taking a good look at the *Alabama* as she lay at anchor. We then proceeded out through the western passage, and without anchoring, stood off and on, outside the breakwater ; keeping a sharp lookout, and waiting for the Confederate to come out.

This was kept up for five days; the crew meantime drilling at the guns, and seeing that everything was in working order. On Sunday, June 19th, at 10.20 A. M., all hands being at muster on the quarter deck, and while the Captain was reading the Church service, the lookout, on the fore-top-sail yard, reported to the officer of the deck that the *Alabama* was coming out. The Captain took the trumpet, called all hands to quarters, and ordered the ship cleared for action.

Orders came to the engine room to start all the fires (we had been running under half steam) and to prepare for action. Our bow was turned away from the shore, and we steamed out toward the middle of the English Channel, so that the engagement should take place outside of the three mile limit, and also that the *Alabama* might not be able to run inshore in case she attempted to get away.

The *Alabama* was convoyed to the distance of three miles from the French coast by the French ironclad frigate, *La Couronne*. The *Alabama* then continued on her course out, while the French frigate returned inshore.

After Captain Winslow was satisfied that the *Alabama* was well outside French waters, the *Kearsarge* was put about, and headed straight for her enemy. At very long range the *Alabama* commenced firing, thinking that she might do us some damage by raking shot; but they mostly fell short, or went clear, some passing over us.

As we approached her, we sheered off, giving her a broadside from our starboard battery at a distance of about one thousand yards, intending to run under her stern and rake her; but, perceiving our intention, Semmes wisely kept his broadside to us, using his starboard battery. The tide was setting to the westward, and our manoeuvring commenced a little to the eastward of the harbor, on a circle, each vessel being on opposite sides. The engagement took place on a panoramic plan, directly in front of Cherbourg, about six miles distant, in plain view of thousands of people that had come to witness the fight; it hav-

ing been reported in Paris Saturday evening that we were to meet on Sunday morning.

During the early part of the fight, it did not seem to Captain Winslow that our shot or shell were doing much damage, and he decided to fight at closer quarters. We accordingly shortened the distance between us, and could then see, by the confusion on the enemy's deck, that we had not wasted our ammunition.

After an hour's fighting, the *Alabama* attempted to set sail and run inshore. The order of four bells ("ahead fast") was given to the engine room; we forged ahead, and were soon in a position to rake the enemy fore and aft; but she was too far gone, and had commenced to settle when she hauled down her colors, soon showing a white flag over her stern. Semmes then sent a boat alongside of us to say he had surrendered. She was now about five miles from shore.

The engagement lasted one hour and two minutes, each vessel using her starboard battery, and moving in a circle around a common centre.

When we brought her port side into view, we saw that where our shell had made only small holes in entering, on exploding within, they had opened large gaps in her port side. Then the *Alabama* sank, going down stern first, with her bow high in the air, leaving the crew struggling in the water. The *Deerhound*, an English steam yacht, which had been lying at a safe distance inshore, now steamed under our stern, and Captain Winslow requested her commander to assist him in saving the crew, as most of our boats were disabled. (We had only two that would float, and they were sent to pick up the men.) While thus engaged, it was observed by the officers of our vessel that the *Deerhound* was steaming towards the English coast, and evidently going away with our prisoners. Permission was asked by some of our officers to heave her to. Winslow refused, saying that the commander of an English yacht would not do such a thing as to carry our prisoners away, but was only steaming

about, and would return with them to our ship ; but it was not so. The *Deerhound* went off with Semmes and a number of his officers and crew, landing them at Southampton, England.

I will say that our boats' crews were out, and it might have been possible that the rescued men would have overpowered them ; and it would certainly have been a very grave error to have followed the yacht and left the men under such circumstances.

After we had picked up all the men we could find in the water, and had taken them from one of the French pilot boats that had brought them alongside (making in all seventy men and officers), we steamed into the harbor of Cherbourg and came to anchor.

Captain Winslow sent an officer ashore to visit the Admiral of the Port, in order to obtain permission to land the prisoners on parole, and also to be permitted to send the wounded of both vessels to the Marine Hospital ; which was granted.

Virtually, the *Alabama* was an English ship, with English guns, manned by an English crew, sunk in the English channel, and Semmes and other officers were run away with by an English yacht.

During the engagement, a 110-lb. rifle shell entered the bulwarks and exploded, wounding three of our after pivot-gun's crew ; but everybody was working with such coolness and precision that no more notice was taken of the casualty than to have them taken below to the surgeon on the berth-deck, for medical attendance. No other casualties befell our crew during the engagement.

We never ascertained the losses on the *Alabama*, but judged them to have been twenty or more.

We were struck twenty-eight times in hull and rigging, which caused the following damages : A 110-lb. rifle shell struck the roof of the engine house, cutting it completely through and across, knocking the splinters and glass in all directions into the engine room below ; and it became neces-

sary to set the men to sweeping them up to prevent them from getting into the machinery.

A shell entered the smoke-pipe and exploded inside, tearing out a space on the port side about three feet in diameter, cutting a boat hanging on the davits, full of small holes with the fragments.

Another 110-lb. shell struck a glancing blow under the counter and deflecting, entered the rudder post and remained there, but did not explode: nor did it jam the rudder so that it could not be used; situated as this shell was, it would have done us very serious damage had it exploded.

One shot carried away the starboard life-buoy.

Three 32-lb. shot went through the port bulwarks forward of the mizzen mast.

A shell exploded at the after end of after-pivot-gun port. Another shell exploded at the after end of chain plating. Two shot struck below the plank-sheer abreast of the boiler-room hatch, one in the plank-sheer of the forward-pivot-gun port, one forward of the fore rigging, two through the port quarter-boat, and a number in the shrouds and rigging, doing more or less damage.

To illustrate the effect of discipline aboard a man-of-war, I will relate an incident that occurred during the fight.

John W. Dempsey, a quarter-gunner who was wounded, received a compound comminuted fracture of his right arm. As he went from the after-pivot-gun to the hospital, forward, with his arm dangling by his side and bleeding freely, he took his cap from his head and held it under his hand to prevent the deck from being stained with his blood.

Before we went into the fight, an American flag was sent to the main truck in a stop: at the end of the fight, the *Alabama's* last shot struck the halyards, and breaking the stop, let the flag loose to the breeze.

The crew of each vessel was as follows: *Kearsarge*, one hundred and sixty-three, all told; the *Alabama*, about the same

number, as near as could be ascertained at the time, although her crew had numbered as high as one hundred and seventy, a short time before.

The *Alabama* had been in Cherbourg a week preparing, and had taken aboard three hundred and fifty tons of coal, which brought her down in the water; while the *Kearsarge* had only one hundred and seventy tons aboard, making her very high out of water.

The size of the two vessels was as follows :

	ALABAMA.	KEARSARGE.
Length of keel . . . .	210 feet	199 feet.
Beam . . . . .	32 "	33 "
Depth . . . . .	17 "	17 "
Tonnage . . . . .	1040	1031

Armament :

Kearsarge,	4 short 32-pounders
	2 11-in. smooth bores (Dahlgrens)
	1 30-lb. rifle
Total	7 guns.
Alabama,	1 7-in. Blakely rifle, 110 lbs.
	1 8-in. smooth bore, 64 lbs.
	6 long 32-pounders
Total	8 guns.

The total number of shot and shell fired by the *Kearsarge* was one hundred and seventy-three, while it was stated that the *Alabama* fired about three hundred and seventy.

The repairs were all made by our own men, and we continued cruising in the English Channel.

On August 11th, 1864, we left Dover, England, on our way home, stopping at Fayal; then running due south to the St. Paul Rocks which are situated about one degree north of the Equator and almost in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, without any light or beacon, in fact nothing to mark their location.

We proceeded to the southward to the Island of Fernando de Noronha, a penal settlement belonging to Brazil, and then to

off Rocas Islands, northwest to Barbadoes where we arrived October 23d ; thence to St. Thomas, remaining three days.

While lying here two steamers were sighted in the offing showing the American colors. We proceeded out of the harbor and found the U. S. Steamer *Wachusett* on her way to the United States with the Confederate Steamer *Florida* which she had captured by boarding, and had taken out of the harbor of Bahia, in Brazil. We relieved her of part of the *Florida's* crew and brought them home with us.

We arrived at Boston at five minutes after twelve o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, November 8th, 1864, having been two years and nine months away from the United States. We were given a reception and banquet by the city government in Faneuil Hall, it being the second time its doors had been thrown open for a like occasion. The first was in 1812, when Captain Hull, commanding the frigate *Constitution*, came into Boston Harbor with the crew captured from the English frigate *Guerriere*, which she had destroyed in an engagement on the high seas.

We were also banqueted at the Revere House by the merchants of Boston, receiving a most enthusiastic welcome from all. On the 28th of November, 1864, the crew were discharged and the officers were detached. Thus ended the first cruise of the *Kearsarge*, one of the most famous of American naval steamers.

AMUSING THE ENEMY



## AMUSING THE ENEMY

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL FRANCIS S. HESSELTINE, U. S. V.

THIS is a simple story, a brief account of an unimportant part of the great contest in suppressing the rebellion. I come not with a recital of heroic deeds, hard fought battles, brilliant victories. The path of duty does not always lead to the grandest heights. Mine is a "plain unvarnished tale" relating to the Texas Coast Expedition in 1863.

To this expedition history gives a very small space. The ten-volume life of Abraham Lincoln, by Nicolay and Hay, which contains a full account of all the movements of the armies, devotes hardly a page to this Texas campaign. Grant in his memoirs still more briefly refers to it. Having stated that on August 7th, 1863, he sent to General Banks the Thirteenth Army Corps, and that he went to New Orleans to confer, being directed to co-operate with him in movements west of the Mississippi, he sums up the whole event in a word — "All these movements came to naught."

So little is generally known of this movement to the Rio Grande and up the coast of Texas, that I have thought it not altogether a vain task, though it may fail in interest, to give an account of this expedition, its purpose, course, and accomplishment.


After the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson in July 1863, when the great river went again unvexed by rebel guns and barricades to the sea, Generals Grant and Banks recommended an immediate movement against Mobile, but General Halleck refused his consent. August 6th a despatch to Banks informed

him that there were important reasons why our flag should be established in Texas with the least possible delay.

President Lincoln wrote a confidential letter to General Grant on August 9th saying of the proposal to capture Mobile, "This would appear tempting to me also were it not that in view of recent events in Mexico I am greatly impressed with the importance of re-establishing the national authority in western Texas as soon as possible." In the darkest hours of our struggle to suppress the rebellion and maintain our national existence Napoleon III., assisted for a time by the forces of Spain and England, attempted the conquest of Mexico under the pretence of restoring order there. In May, England and Spain having withdrawn their troops, the French captured the capital and proceeded to establish a government in Mexico. Having convened an assembly in July, it declared for an imperial government, and selected as Emperor the Archduke Maximilian of Austria.

General Banks, in obedience to the directions to occupy Texas, immediately made preparations to do so, and on the 5th of September sent an expedition under General Franklin to land below the Sabine Pass, capture the fort at the head of it, and move rapidly to the occupation of Houston, the capital of the State. General Franklin arranged for the gunboats, reconstructed merchant vessels, to enter the Pass and attack the fort. They ran aground, were exposed to fire, and surrendered. General Franklin thereupon abandoned the expedition, returning to New Orleans within six days after he sailed.

Immediately after this lamentable failure, on September 13th, troops were transferred to Bayou Têche for an overland movement; but after planning and beginning this campaign General Banks came to realize that the region through which he was to march was barren, with little water; that it required a march of three hundred miles with wagon trains, and then at the end, if not sooner, he would have to meet the enemy in full force; and as he says, the movement was necessarily abandoned in consequence.



Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan did not seek to avoid the enemy, but marched where they were to be found. Then was devised and organized by General Banks this expedition to the Western Coast of Texas, and on the 26th of October, 1863, there sailed under command of Major-General Napoleon J. F. Dana, General Banks accompanying, a force of about four thousand men, being the Second Division of the Thirteenth Army Corps, to which was attached the 13th and 15th Maine Infantry Regiments of the Nineteenth Army Corps, the first of which regiments I had the honor to command.

This expedition was taken without the knowledge of the authorities at Washington, and General Halleck on learning of it immediately wrote his disapproval to General Banks, who excused it on the ground that he was directed to enter Texas at once, and that this was the one safe line of movement. The fleet was scattered by a severe gale in the Gulf, but reassembled at the point of destination, and on November 7th we landed without welcome on the deserted shores of Brazos Santiago, a small force of the enemy retiring. General Dana on board ship, being surprised at sight of a regiment drilling a few hours after a rough sea voyage, sent off to inquire its name, and then with compliments to the commander for its condition, gave the 13th Maine Regiment the honor of the advance. At midnight came an order for this regiment to move at once for the mouth of the Rio Grande, where a small force with difficulty and with some loss had made a landing by boats through the surf. Before day-break, without equipage or rations, none having as yet been landed, we marched out, forded the Boca-chica, and after several hours suffering under the hot sun without food or water, we reached the river's mouth and foraged for something to eat. During the day, as no rations had reached us and it was important to move on to Brownsville at once, with one or two men as an escort I crossed the Rio Grande to Bagdad, Mexico. Bagdad was a small city built of shanties occupied by Greasers, Confederates, blockade runners, and desperadoes. I was warned as I

landed to be careful or I would be shot down, but I announced that I came only for provisions, and had left orders if fired upon, and I did not return within an hour, for my regiment to cross and destroy the town. Fortunately no such violation of international law took place.

I found a shrewd trader who was willing to furnish rations for my regiment and deliver them across the river, on my written order on the United States Government, payment to be made in gold ; and I have often wondered if Uncle Sam honored my draft when presented.

About sundown with haversacks filled, the 1st Missouri Light Artillery being joined to our command, we began a forced march for Brownsville, thirty-five miles distant. The next forenoon, November 5th, we marched into Brownsville, from which a short time before the rebel general H. P. Bee with his troops had retreated without firing a shot, after setting fire to buildings and stores.

General José Maria Cobos, a Spaniard by birth, long a resident of Mexico, from which he had been banished the preceding March, was residing at Brownsville. He organized a force prior to our arrival to overcome a mob of marauders and suppress the conflagration. That evening after our arrival he crossed the river with his men, took possession of Matamoras, issued a grandiloquent proclamation assuming the government and imprisoned Señor Don Manuel Ruiz, military Governor of Tamaulipas, and his officers. That night the 13th Maine Regiment encamped in Fort Brown, famous for its defence against the attacks of the Mexican army during the Mexican war, and named from Major Brown who was killed there. My headquarters were a few boards leaning against the parapet, my couch a blanket on the ground. All night the Mexican bands celebrated the revolution of General Cobos. The next morning at eight o'clock I heard across the river the volley that shot him ; another successful revolution under General Cortinas having occurred very early, and Cobos after a trial occupying but a few minutes was con-

demned and executed. The former Governor Ruiz was then released, but fled to Brownsville for our protection.

On November 13th, with a Mexican guide, the 13th Maine Regiment marched for Point Isabel, thirty-one miles distant, with orders to report there to General Ransom, who had embarked with troops at that point. We marched as before in light order, our tents and baggage not having reached us. We bivouacked for the night near the famous battle-fields of Resaca de la Palma and Palo Alto, and being misled by our guide, wandered, suffering for water over the arid sandy country, reaching Point Isabel about four o'clock, where we occupied a church overlooking the sea. Here I first met and came under the command of Brigadier-General T. E. G. Ransom, a most genial, generous and gallant officer. He so distinguished himself by his reckless bravery at Shiloh, exciting the admiration of General Grant, that he won his promotion. He was severely wounded later at Pleasant Hills. Then having been transferred to the northwest he died while in command of the Seventeenth Army Corps on the march to the sea, near Rome, Georgia. General Sherman esteemed him most highly, and gave to the St. Louis Grand Army Post the name of his beloved officer.

On November 16th, the 13th and 15th Maine Regiments and two companies of the 20th Iowa Infantry, with two boat howitzers, in charge of Ensign Henry Grinnell, afterward Lieutenant United States Navy, and later an officer with the rank of Admiral in the Japanese Navy, now a companion of this commandery, the whole force under the command of General Ransom, sailed for Corpus Christi. Being unable to cross the bar into the bay, about sunset we landed at the south end of Mustang Island and made a rapid night march up the beach, the 13th Maine Regiment in advance, with a line of skirmishers in front, to capture the Confederate works at Aransas Pass, one of the inlets to Corpus Christi Bay.

Never shall I forget the weird beauty of that silent night march along the smooth white sands of the beach, with the con-

tinual roll and solemn beat of the dark waters of the Gulf against the shore. The waning moon shedding a dim benignant light, the North Star beckoning us to the mysterious uncertainty beyond, — a glorious struggle, victory, captivity, or death.

General Ransom sent an orderly to order a halt but he could not reach us until four o'clock in the morning, when having marched eighteen miles, we dropped down on the sand and rested an hour until daybreak, then pushed forward again, driving in the enemy's skirmishers. The 13th Maine by its rapid movement marched far in advance of the rest of our forces, followed by the 15th Maine Regiment. The 20th Iowa did not get up until after the capture. Deploying, we followed close on their picket lines, fairly surprising the enemy; and as we rushed over their works, they raised the white flag of surrender.

General Ransom, in his report of the affair, see page 426, vol. 26, Record War of the Rebellion, says, "I desire particularly to make honorable mention of Colonel Isaac Dyer, Commander of the 15th Maine Regiment, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hesseltine commanding the 13th Maine Infantry, who were untiring in their efforts to encourage their men and urge them forward," and I hope I may be pardoned for repeating these words from General Ransom's report. "Lieutenant-Colonel Hesseltine was the first man to land through the surf and plant his colors on the island." Here I obtained my favorite horse Zip that did good service afterwards in Virginia, and went to my home in Maine after the war. The rebel major's saddle, a huge Texan affair, the star on it denoting his rank, I still preserve as a memento.

On November 22nd, General Ransom in obedience to the orders of Major-General C. C. Washburn now commanding this division, crossed Aransas Pass and moved eight miles up St. Joseph Island to Cedar Bayou, which separates St. Joseph from Matagorda Island. Here our advance had difficulty with a small force, and Major Charles Hill commanding the Confederate forces was killed. A severe norther delayed our crossing for two

days, then we were ferried across and moved up the island for the capture of Fort Esperanza, at the north end of the island commanding Pass Cavallo to Matagorda Bay.

On November 27th we drove the enemy into their works, threw up an earthwork, mounted one or two guns, opened fire, and began to dig our way towards the fort preparatory to assault. I received orders to command a night expedition across Espirito Santo Bay, to capture a one gun earthwork on Bayucos Island and prevent the retreat of the Confederates, but another severe norther delayed the movement, and on the night of the 28th we were startled by heavy explosions caused by the enemy blowing up some of their magazines before retreating. The fort was a strong work, mounting one 128-pounder Columbiad, and seven 24-pounder siege guns. At this point orders came from General Banks at New Orleans that a further advance of our troops would bring down the concentrated forces of the enemy, and that we must be largely reinforced before such advance was made; "that in the meantime the commanding general desires that you scout actively all the country in your front and press your scouts in the direction of Caney Creek and make demonstration with a view to amuse and confuse the enemy." We had no cavalry force; on one side was Matagorda Bay, the Gulf of Mexico on the other; in front a long narrow peninsula extending nearly sixty miles to Caney River. We knew little of the position or strength of the enemy. How was it supposed that we could "scout actively and amuse and confuse the enemy." I will give a brief account of one attempt to do this. On the evening of December 28th, orders came to me from General Ransom to detail one hundred men under the command of a captain to go aboard the gunboat *Granite City*, which would go up the coast in the night, and at early daylight land the force near the head of Matagorda peninsula with instructions to reconnoitre, ascertain about the Confederate force there, then march down and cut off a company of Confederate cavalry scouring the peninsula. I immediately went to the General's head-

quarters to confer about this strange order to land one hundred unmounted men sixty miles from our army near an unknown force of the enemy. General Ransom replied that the order had come from General Washburn, the division commander, and that while he questioned the wisdom of it, the instructions must be carried out. I then claimed the right, if one hundred of my men were to be sent on such a wild expedition, to command them in person. My request was granted, and that night the men were embarked on the *Granite City*, General Ransom accompanying on the gunboat *Sciota*, commanded by Lieutenant George H. Perkins, now a resident of Boston, a member of this Commandery.<sup>1</sup> About daylight in a foggy mist, the shore hardly discernible, we were landed on the beach. Immediately after a norther, which beats down the sea, one can land on this shore, but very soon after the wind changes, the waves roll in, the surf breaks, and no boat can approach the beach. The last boat reached the shore with difficulty and was nearly swamped. We were now in an unknown place at least fifty miles from our army, with no means of communication with the gunboats; we were in obedience to orders to "amuse" if not to "confuse the enemy."

The *Sciota*, with General Ransom on board, went farther up opposite the Brazos River to reconnoitre, and soon we heard her guns firing on the enemy's works. We had landed near the house of an old man who had lost two sons in the rebellion; we found here, and took possession of several boarding pikes which had floated ashore from the wreck of the U. S. Steamer *Hatteras*, sunk in the Gulf by the *Alabama*. Having sent an officer with a small force farther up the peninsula for information, we ascertained that we had landed within a few miles of the whole Confederate army, who would doubtless soon learn of our position and come down upon us. Deploying my small force across the peninsula we moved down, driving in front of us Captain Henderson's company of Confederate scouts, who lower down abandoned their horses and escaped in boats across the

<sup>1</sup> Since deceased.

bay. We secured a couple of their horses and I was again a mounted officer. Now and then we saw hovering in our rear and watching us, a small body of cavalry. About 1 o'clock we passed, and halted for an hour near, an old German farmer's house. Both he and his wife were very pressing in their invitations for me and my officers to come to his house and dine. They seemed too urgent and we declined, but the old lady brought us down an abundant repast, evidently seeking to detain us with good fare. I afterwards learned that some of the Confederate scouts were concealed in their house and that they sought our delay and capture.

We had proceeded but a short distance after our halt and meal when the continued whistling of the *Granite City* that followed us down the coast gave warning of a danger which as yet was not apparent. Soon she opened with her guns, firing at the approaching enemy. After a while with the aid of my glass I could see the advance of a large body of cavalry galloping down in pursuit. The sea was too rough for accurate firing from the gunboat, and their shell did not retard the pursuing forces. In a short time they ceased firing altogether. On came the enemy, their long column uncoiling like some huge serpent drawing continually nearer to our small band, ready to spring upon and destroy it. Far back the whole peninsula was alive with mounted men coming at full trot. The rear of the column could not be seen. The force as we afterwards learned, was a brigade of Confederate cavalry, the 1st Texas Regiment Mounted Rifles and a Texas Cavalry Regiment, Colonel R. R. Brown, all under the command of Colonel Buchel, a former officer in the Prussian Army. They came on gayly, confident of their prey, a party apparently too small to offer resistance, and too far from its base to hope for aid, out on an open plain with no possible way of escape. I rallied my men and continued the march, allowing the Confederates to approach quite near to my line, when at command the company halted, the rear rank faced about and opened fire. It was a reception they had not antici-

pated ; one or two dropped from their saddles, others hugged their horses' necks, and a large detachment began to move towards the bay on the right out of range, to get below and cut off our line of retreat. I ordered the company forward again. One of my officers remonstrated, declaring that we might as well fight and die there as anywhere. Repeating the command forward, the march was resumed. I confess I did not at first know what to do. I wanted time to think. I could see no way of escape. It was hopeless to fight there in the open plain, retreat was impossible, and soon our line of march would be cut off.

Unwilling to surrender while there was a single chance, I looked and sought to find that chance, and whether there was anything to do but halt and resist the enemy. At one time I did form a square, intending to receive their charge, but as they moved out of range to get below us I ordered the retreat again. There appeared no possible line of escape, but no man should ever despair. One can always find a way or make it. Need I say I looked up for wisdom and guidance, and rode on a little in advance to seek the means of escape for which I prayed ? Soon, glancing ahead, it flashed upon me like an inspiration. A short distance beyond there was a bayou extending into the peninsula from the bay, which formed a wide marsh, reaching quite near to the Gulf side where we were. I noticed that trunks of trees, branches and drift stuff were strewn along the shore. I rode back and instructed the men that when opposite this place they, at command, were to rush on to the beach, drop their guns and pile up a barricade of the trunks and drift stuff on the sand ridge which extended some hundred feet back from the water, and to be ready to seize their guns again at the signal announcing the approach of the enemy. It was done quickly, every man working with renewed energy and confidence. The Confederates came down with a yell, thinking we were demoralized and had broken ranks. They formed opposite us, as many and as well as the nature of the ground would allow, and began to

advance for a charge. They caught sight, as they drew near, of our strange rough work looming above the sand ridge, and halted just out of range, evidently surprised at this sudden erection, and sent up a reconnoitering force to inspect the work. At command every man took possession of his rifle, and at the order when within range opened fire upon the party. Some of them rode back to report, and then they began to ford the bayou to get down to the beach below. They reformed on the beach to charge upon our flank, but before they could reach us on that side a barricade from the sand ridge to the water had been piled up as if by magic, every man and officer working with a will, and soon we were enclosed on three sides by a rough work with gnarled roots and branches projecting, forming such an abatis as no horseman would care to charge against.

Would they dismount and attempt our capture, was the question. They were numerous enough, and if they had the will could do it perhaps. Darkness came on. The *Granite City* sent a boat in as near as they could to the beach and shouted to ask if they could render assistance, but communication was impossible and the boat returned. To encourage the men, and for a challenge to dispirit the enemy, I ordered three rousing cheers, which were given with a will, and which the enemy heard, as we afterwards learned from their report of the affair. After a while we saw the lights of the *Sciota* returning. The *Granite City* sent up signal lights and rockets. The *Sciota* ran down, communicated with the *Granite City*, and that boat went off down towards the point, sent as we inferred, for relief. The *Sciota* ran in as near as she could opposite our position and anchored. Through the mist her lights looked a mile away; she could not communicate with us, but Captain Perkins fired a shot to announce his presence and to assure us that he would stay by us. We built fires on each flank to let him know our position, and without what lines he could aim his guns, if he opened fire. We continued at work strengthening our barricade, digging and throwing the sand up into it.

Every man was assigned to his post, which he was not to quit for the night. Pickets were sent out to watch and give warning of the approach of the enemy, as we did not doubt that they would dismount and make a night attack. We suffered with thirst and dug in the sand, obtaining a little brackish water; the soldiers rested their backs against the barricade ready for instant action. The gallant Captain Perkins walked the bridge on his gunboat and kept his men at quarters all night, his ship lying close in, the surf breaking all around her. He lent us the moral force of his presence, though in case of a close fight he could do little to aid us.

When at one time our fires were suffered to become low, they lost heart on the gunboat, and declared that we must have given up and surrendered. Shortly after midnight our pickets opened fire and ran in announcing the approach of the enemy. A dark column of men on foot appeared moving on our left flank. We opened fire as they approached and instantly the *Sciota* slipped her anchor and fifty fathoms of chain which she had out, turned broadside to, and fired in the direction in which the flash of our guns indicated that the enemy were approaching. The attacking force, finding us prepared, broke and retired, troubling us no more that night; later the moon broke through the clouds, lending us her uncertain light. The morning brought no additional cheer or hope; a thick fog hid both friend and foe. We could not see a hundred feet away. Pickets sent out reported that appearances indicated that the main force had gone down the peninsula and that only a few scouts were in our immediate front. The enemy doubtless having us cut off had gone below to meet any relieving force, and were waiting for us to come out and surrender. Our rations were exhausted and we were suffering with thirst. There was no cavalry at the point and probably from the report which came by the *Granite City* of our condition it would be considered useless to attempt our rescue; no troops could be landed and we would be compelled to surrender long before infantry could reach us. In

fact the gunboat *Granite City* reported that the force of the enemy was overwhelming and that we were no doubt captured, and it was so reported to the headquarters at New Orleans. The few horses at the point, some thirty, were mounted and sent up the peninsula but were driven back. About noon the fog lifted, the sun appeared, and we caught glimpses of the old *Monongahela*, Captain Strong, far off from shore, with the gunboat *Estrella* steaming up from the point. There was no rescue possible, as no boat could approach the beach. Later we discerned the Confederate gunboat *J. G. Carr* in the bay steaming from the direction of Matagorda City. As she approached I could read her name with my glass, and see her decks crowded with soldiers. She had on board an infantry force sent over to aid in our capture. When opposite our position she opened fire with shot and shell; fortunately only a few of the shell that dropped around and near us exploded, and as we were protected behind our wall no one was injured. About three o'clock, as there was no prospect of relief, and no force could be seen in our immediate front, it being useless to remain there longer without rations and no prospect of rescue, I decided that we must go out and try to force our way down the peninsula. This was our only hope of escape. I divided my force into two companies, sending in advance one-half with skirmishers under the command of a brave officer, Captain R. B. Grover, now of Brockton, leaving a few men for a while to build fires and work conspicuously on the fort to deceive the enemy: the remaining force moved out about a mile in rear of the advance. The men went out singly, concealing themselves from the enemy by moving low under the cover of the sand ridge. The instructions were if the advance platoon was attacked they were to fall back on us who would throw up a barricade, and if we were attacked we were to join them, who would prepare a like protection. The enemy were deceived and continued firing at the work after our departure. Even on the *Sciota* they did not divine our purpose to abandon the work, supposing that a force of sharpshooters

had been sent out to open fire on the troops aboard the gunboat, and remained at anchor.

Night came on and some distance ahead we saw a light like a camp fire. We reconnoitered and found the remains of a house set on fire by the enemy in punishment for assistance rendered by the owner to the mounted men sent up from the Point and driven back the day before. Here at the well the boys for the first time were able to fill their canteens. About nine o'clock the most terrible norther yet experienced, a perfect blizzard, struck us. Only those who have experienced a norther on the Texas Coast know anything of the fierceness and penetrating power of the freezing wind. It pierces all garments, and out of doors there is no escape from its chilling grasp. Men and cattle exposed perish before its deadly breath. We suffered much in our camps during this campaign. We took the skins of cattle killed for food and stretched them over stakes for shelter; we dug holes in the sand, building some cover over them; we had devised every way in vain for protection from this fiend. Now it was our welcome friend, possibly our deliverer. The foe would hide from its fury; we rugged men from the Pine Tree State would march as long as it was possible. By eleven o'clock the exhausted men could go no farther and we hugged the ground as closely as we could under the lee of the sand ridge. After two hours flesh and blood could not endure the cold; the water in my canteen was frozen, and I allowed the men to build and hover round fires which, as a caution, I had at first forbidden. Still the men were freezing. By chance we had halted near a house just behind a ridge, which the light of the fire disclosed. Forcing our way with difficulty against the gale we reached the house, aroused its inmates, two young women and two children; they hesitated, and refused us admission until assured that we meant no harm, and that they should be protected. Assigning them a room under a guard, we built a fire in the fire-place and thawed out the men before it. The girls in the morning got the officers a

good breakfast of corn-cake, meat, eggs, etc., the men baking some sweet potatoes. While at breakfast we were startled by the firing of cannon and immediately formed on the beach. Far up the coast the *Estrella*, as we afterwards learned, was firing on the Confederate gun-boat in the bay. The *Granite City* could be seen anchored below us, but she did not know our whereabouts and did not discover our signals to her; the gale continued but we resumed our march. About 3 o'clock P.M., when some twenty miles from Decrow's Point, lookouts on the *Sciota* which was then steaming down, discovered us, signalled, and sent in to attempt to take us off. The tars pulled in as near as they could, then jumping overboard held the boats till we waded out to them, then pushed off and with great labor got out through the heavy surf, repeating the service until all were taken off. As we approached the *Sciota*, the tars manned the rigging and gave three cheers, which we heartily returned. General Ransom assisted the men on board and heartily shook every man's hand as he reached the deck; all the officers gave us a royal welcome, and the tars in like manner the soldiers. Double rations were issued. Another chain and anchor were lost in getting under way. In the heavy sea it was impossible to weigh it. Shortly after the lookout reported a large force of cavalry moving up the beach; there in plain sight was our late foe returning. The gun-boat had discovered and taken us off none too soon. That night was a bitter cold one, the severity of the norther increased, water freezing several inches thick, but we were safe, comfortably housed and cared for in the good *Sciota*. In the cabin that night we had a rejoicing, watching out the old and welcoming in the New Year, 1864.

The next day we entered the harbor and landed. With a brief intermission the gale continued until January 5th, causing great suffering and the deaths of many horses and mules from exposure and want of forage. I turned my horses loose, either to find food by grazing or to perish. When the storm ceased, we obtained from a Confederate deserter papers containing their

account of the affair. It appeared that the rebel boat *J. G. Carr* had on board Captain Rugeley's company from Matagorda City, who landed after dark to capture us, and that many perished, frozen to death. Some years after the war I met in the State of Georgia a Southern lady who at the time lived in Matagorda and learned that Captain Rugeley's command was a company of home guards, composed of the best young men of Matagorda. About thirty were lost. A few who survived came to the fires which we had left when we abandoned the work, to surrender. I give this brief extract from the "Tri-Weekly Telegraph of Houston."

CAMP WHARTON, Dec. 31, 1863.

We have had considerable excitement within the past twenty-four hours. The Yankees landed at Caney River on the 29th inst. Their force was about three hundred. They marched down the beach to entrap the Houston videttes; they were pursued by Buchel; then entrenched themselves on the lower side of a marsh behind drift-wood, and cheered lustily. Buchel approached, but deeming it too hazardous to charge them under the circumstances, retreated, after exchanging some shots in which we had five or six wounded, we having had bad luck in this game.

VIDETTE

CAMP WHARTON, Jan. 2, '64.

Captain Rugeley embarked with some forty or fifty men in their small boats during the night. Shortly after they started, a severe norther sprang up which was so severe as to swamp the frail barks, and the brave men who had thus risked their lives to rescue their comrades were buffeted about the bay all night. Next day some twenty reached the shore in safety, but almost frozen to death, as the day was a bitter cold one. The day passed, and the night was freezing cold; the next morning, New Year's Day, fourteen were found, but Oh, God! How? In the beach, drowned and frozen. How horrible to think that fourteen young and brave men should meet with such a death.

This is the most horrible calamity that has occurred on the coast of Texas during the war.

VIDETTE.

The following is extracted from Colonel Buchel's report:

HEADQUARTERS, 2d BRIGADE, 2d DIVISION.

Dec. 31st, 1863.

DEAR SIR:—

I have the honor to report that on the morning of the 29th inst. I received intelligence of the arrival of two or three gunboats near the works being erected at the mouth of the Caney, and of the landing of a force of men. I immediately

started with the two regiments under my command, and proceeded down the peninsula for the purpose of saving Captain Henderson's squad of exempts and my scouts, as I had no doubt that these men had been landed with a view to cut them off and capture them. I proceeded in a trot and gallop until I had overtaken the enemy, who had moved down the peninsula from the place of landing about eight miles. The gunboat which accompanied them awaited our approach about two miles below where they had landed, and when within shelling distance she opened on us with shell, rifle shot, and spherical case shot. After overtaking the enemy, it took a position behind the marsh and began to make breastworks of the logs which were profusely strewn along the beach. I thought the risk too great and the enterprise too hazardous to attack them in their breastworks, as their capture would not compensate for the loss of lives which we must necessarily have sustained. Captain Henderson escaped with his men in a boat, but lost his horses. Both officers and men behaved with coolness and bravery.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,

A. BUCHEL, Colonel, Commanding.

I hold in my hand the report of General Ransom in his own handwriting, handed to me when copied by his Adjutant-General, Dickey, who was killed in the subsequent Red River campaign, when the general was wounded. The general speaks in such flattering terms of the conduct of our little expedition, that it is hardly befitting for me to give his words here. I prize his report more than any memento preserved from the War. Once again before the 13th Maine left I was sent with a small force in boats by night to capture a Confederate gunboat commanding the bay. The pilot, I believe a traitor, failed to guide us through the reef, and daylight found us in easy range of the enemy's guns, but we escaped with small loss. This was the last attempt to "amuse" the enemy. We remained in camp at Decrow's Point until the last of February. No further advance was made, such as at first could have been done safely, as we outnumbered the enemy, and they had no works at the Brazos River at the head of the peninsula. The troops at Decrow's Point were transported up Atchafalaya Bay to Brashear City, to take part in the disastrous Red River campaign. If the campaign had been stronger, my story would have been longer. The purpose of this campaign, a notice and warning to France that Texas was one of the United States which the government pro-

posed to hold and occupy, thus lending our moral support to the adjacent friendly republic of Mexico, was accomplished. Brownsville and points in Western Texas were held. Napoleon did not heed the occupation by General Banks, but when at the close of the Rebellion, General Sheridan with troops went to the Rio Grande, he did take heed, withdrew the French troops, and left the brave Maximilian to his sad and untimely fate.

## THE CAPTURE OF RICHMOND



## THE CAPTURE OF RICHMOND

BY

LIEUTENANT R. B. PRESCOTT, U.S.V.

THE Confederate capital, as it appeared before the war, was a fair and pleasant city, occupying a commanding position on the north bank of the James River, at the head of tide water, about one hundred and fifty miles from the sea, and about ninety miles from Washington in a southwesterly direction. Like ancient Rome, it was built on seven hills, surrounded by beautiful scenery, possessing a few fine public buildings, and a beautiful park adorned with statues of men famous in their country's history. It was the capital of the state, and rich in all the natural elements of growth and prosperity.

During the war it was one of the most strongly fortified cities ever known. Its inner line of defences consisted of seventeen powerful earthworks, forming almost a complete circle about a mile from the city (the interruption being on the southwest where the river in itself was considered a sufficient protection), mounting more than three hundred guns of the heaviest calibre, and commanding each foot of ground in every direction.

A second line of continuous earthworks almost surrounded it again, and in places deemed especially weak or exposed, a third line outside of this. Not a hill or knoll for miles around but bristled with cannon. Nature had most admirably adapted it for a defensive position, protecting it on the south and west by the river, and on the north and east by that vast tract known as the swamps of the Chickahominy in which so many thousands of McClellan's men perished in the spring and summer campaigns of 1862.

Its naval defences consisted of several powerful gunboats which lay in the river opposite the city, but their range of movement being limited to the seven miles of river navigation lying between their anchorage and the Dutch Gap Canal, they were of little or no use except as a show of strength.

Five lines of railroads brought supplies from the outer world, and thus surrounded, defended and supplied, this proud city, secure in its position, confident in the strength of its defences and the inexhaustibleness of its resources, maintained itself through four long years of bloodiest strife, as the seat and stronghold of the Confederate government, — its military centre, — the very heart of the Confederacy. And so secure did its thirty-eight thousand inhabitants feel against the most strenuous efforts of the Union armies to capture it, that from May, 1861, when it was made the seat of the Confederate government, until June, 1864, it was held by only a few thousand militia, mainly boys and old men unfit for more arduous and active service in the field. Until the last of September, 1864, the exterior line of its triple wall of defence had never been carried. Union troops had on several occasions come within sight of it; in one or two instances it had been for a moment pierced, but the assaults had always been repulsed, and no Union soldier had ever seen the inner line unless taken through it as a prisoner of war. The city had no appearance of being in a state of siege. The people quietly pursued their various avocations, and save for the newspaper reports, the tales of soldiers on furlough and those of the sick and wounded in the hospitals, they had little knowledge of what was transpiring even in their own army. Consequently, when on that beautiful Sabbath in early April, 1865, the President of the Confederacy, while seated quietly in church, was suddenly notified that General Lee could no longer maintain his lines and that the city must be immediately evacuated, one can easily imagine the scene of consternation and terror that followed.

On Wednesday, September 28, 1864, General Grant, in order

to prevent Lee from sending reinforcements to Early, who was being badly punished by Sheridan in the Valley of the Shenandoah, sent General Ord with a considerable force to make another threatening demonstration against Richmond, and this time from the south, all previous campaigns and attempts having fully demonstrated that the city could be taken only from this direction.

Ord's troops consisted of Stannard's division of the Eighteenth Corps, — three brigades numbering some twenty-five hundred men encamped at Bermuda Hundred — and General Birney with about eight thousand men of the Tenth Corps, including a division of colored troops from the Petersburg front, who was expected to co-operate at a point considerably further to the right. General Kautz, also, with his cavalry, was to penetrate still further, if possible, and make a demonstration along the Darbytown road, one of the turnpikes leading into Richmond. Two pontoon bridges were thrown across the river late in the afternoon of that day, one near Aiken's Landing, about ten miles below Richmond (the place, also, where the exchange of prisoners took place), the other at Deep Bottom, some distance below.

Stannard's division, in which was our regiment, the 13th New Hampshire, crossed at the first named place, Birney and his troops at the second. We left our camp behind the intrenchments at Bermuda Hundred at eight o'clock that morning, September 28, 1864, and spent the day in marching idly about from one position to another. At nine in the evening we started for Aiken's Landing, some three or four miles distant, where the men were massed in the darkness of the woods awaiting the order to cross. The utmost secrecy and silence were observed. The men were allowed to converse only in low tones, and the exhibition of any light, however small, was strictly forbidden. Meanwhile the pioneers were busy covering the bridge thickly with earth, that the measured tread of the troops in crossing might not be heard by the enemy. About three o'clock

on the morning of the 29th all was ready and the movement commenced.

The first faint flushes of dawn were just appearing in the eastern skies when the entire force found itself safely transferred to the north bank of the river, and without delay was immediately ordered forward. Advancing across open fields for about a mile, we entered a travelled road — the Varina road — which led through a piece of pine forest, and just at this point the enemy's pickets were first encountered. A brisk fire was exchanged with our skirmishers, when the enemy hastily retreated leaving their breakfast untouched, which was without ceremony snatched and eaten by our men as they passed along. On emerging from the woods nearly three miles above, a momentary halt was made to afford a hasty survey of the scene before us. Directly in front and nearly three-quarters of a mile distant, on the summit of a hill, stood a large fort, the Confederate flag waving above it, and the black muzzles of its heavy guns plainly visible. Long lines of rifle pits stretched away on either side to the James River on the left, and until lost to view in the woods on the right. The ground between us and the fort was rough and uneven, the trees having been cut away to afford the enemy an unobstructed view of the road, but leaving the stumps a foot or more in height, and the ground strewn with branches. Two brigades, General Burnham's and General Stevens', were ordered to the left of the road; the third, General Roberts', to the right, in order to allow our own artillery to come up the road to the front. No use was made of it however; not a cannon shot from our side was fired during the day, the battle being fought and won by the infantry alone.

In another moment a loud roar, a sudden burst of flame and smoke from the fort, announced that the action had begun. The first few shells screamed harmlessly overhead, only cutting off the tops of the trees and bursting far behind us, but the enemy soon obtained our range and more serious results followed. The first to do any harm struck the edge of an artillery

wheel close to where we stood, straightened its heavy tire and laid it flat as a ribbon along the road, then glancing, cut off the fore-legs of a horse attached to the gun next behind, causing the poor beast to pitch suddenly forward upon his breast. Passing on, it killed two more horses, and finally exploded in a group of men, killing three and wounding several others.

Nothing demoralizes troops more thoroughly than to remain inactive under fire, and it was with a feeling of relief that the order "forward" was received. Steadily, almost as if on parade, in close column by division, with arms at right shoulder, the brigades moved onward, and as the cannon shot from fort and gunboats ploughed great gaps through their ranks, quickly closed up and pressed forward as rapidly as the nature of the ground would permit. It did not take long to traverse that mile of death, and when a point was finally reached where the ground rose so abruptly that the guns of the fort could not be depressed sufficiently to do further harm, a momentary halt was made to enable the men to recover their breath. Then the order to charge was given, and with a yell the men sprang forward. Leaping into the deep moat which surrounded the fort, they climbed by means of each other's shoulders, and their bayonets driven into the opposite wall of earth, to the slope above, over which they swarmed like bees, under a terrible fire of musketry from every available point. So near were they to the enemy that many were severely burned by the flame from the latter's rifles, and their faces blackened by the unburnt powder. The fire was literally in their very faces. It was but a moment, however, ere the parapet was gained. The colors of half a dozen regiments were quickly planted upon it, and as the enemy turned and fled in haste, loud and repeated cheers announced that the dearly bought victory was won. The fort with its sixteen heavy guns and a considerable proportion of its garrison was ours. All this had been accomplished without firing a shot. At the moment of commencing the march across the field the caps were removed from the muskets, bayonets

were fixed, and until the enemy were met face to face within the fort, not a shot from our side had been fired. When once inside the fort, the bayonet alone completed the work. Later in the day we had the misfortune to see General Birney's troops repeatedly repulsed while charging Fort Gilmer, another large earthwork further in our front.

That march of a mile, through such a terrible tempest of lead and iron, was, of course, attended with most disastrous results. General Stevens lay severely wounded just without, and General Burnham dead just within the fort. Both were taken away in the same ambulance, under a heavy fire. Of the assaulting column more than one-third lay dead and wounded between the fort and edge of the woods. Looking back from the parapet of the fort the line of march was seen to be covered with prostrate forms, while the groans and shrieks of agony that came to our ears were most appalling. What with the fire from the fort and the redoubts which flanked it on the right and left, the huge shells which came screaming up from the enemy's gunboats on the river, the bullets from the enemy's riflemen posted in treetops, the roofs and chimneys of the scattered farmhouses, and from the lines of rifle-pits, it is a wonder that the column was not completely annihilated. Had there been an abattis in front of the fort, it is certain that it could not have been taken, and why so important a position was unprovided with this invaluable protection is something I have never been able to understand. It is only on the supposition that the position was considered impregnable.

As the last discharge of the enemy's artillery tore through the broken and shattered ranks, the column wavered and rocked like a tree before a rude blast of wind, and for a moment the task seemed impossible; but under the shelter of the crest before mentioned there was a momentary respite, and the rush and shout which immediately followed were irresistible. As the first men mounted the parapet and looked down into the faces below them a Confederate officer was discovered just sighting

one of the huge pivot guns for another shot, when a Union soldier shouted at the top of his voice, "Don't fire that gun." The Confederate soldier who held the lanyard looked up with a curse upon his lips and defiance in his face, but before he could pull the cord he fell dead, transfixed by the Union bayonet. In another moment a score of ready hands had turned the gun about and its contents of grape and canister were sent crashing through the disorganized ranks of the fleeing enemy.

The capture of this fort, the most important of all the defences on the south of Richmond, and the main reliance of that part of the Confederate lines, created the wildest excitement in the rebel capital. Fearing that the fall of the city would immediately follow, a panic seized upon the citizens, who began packing their valuables and preparing for instant flight. With much difficulty their fears were allayed. They were assured that the position would be speedily retaken, and Jefferson Davis, General Lee and others high in authority came hastily down to Fort Gilmer to study the situation and decide what should be done. From our position we plainly saw the group surveying us through their field-glasses, and from numerous deserters who came into our lines that night we learned that Mr. Davis had declared that the fort must be retaken if it required the entire Confederate army to do it. It would never do to permit the Yankee army to remain permanently within such easy threatening distance; its frequent raids from so secure a position, and the constant bursting of Union shells within the city suburbs would keep the people in constant alarm. So every male between the ages of sixteen and sixty was hurried at once into the defences. The ironclads were sent down the river, and taking up a position directly opposite the fort, they shelled it furiously all the afternoon. The river banks at this point were fortunately so high that the necessary elevation of their guns sent their shells high above the fort bursting harmlessly overhead and scattering their fragments in the fields beyond. Only one shell of the hundreds they threw at us that afternoon came

inside the fort, — and that, a huge two hundred pounder, fortunately did not explode.

Knowing there would be hot work as soon as the enemy attempted to retake the fort, orders were given to strengthen the position as speedily as possible. It was with very different feelings from those of the day before that the men set about this task. Now they would be the defenders and the enemy the attacking force. They felt abundantly able to hold it against any force that could be brought against it. So the dead lying too thickly about the place were hastily buried, leaving the more remote untouched; the enemy's barracks were torn down and the logs piled up into breastworks, covered with bales of hay, and wagons filled with shovels and pickaxes were ordered up from the river bank without delay. This attempt to assist, however, proved utterly useless. The enemy's sharpshooters concealed in the trees and behind the chimneys, shot down the mules as soon as the wagons appeared in sight, and killed the men detailed to go back and fetch the tools in their hands. So every man wrought as best he could with bayonets, sticks, and the tin dipper from which he drank his coffee. Thus digging away as for dear life, by night a low bank of earth ran along the rear of the fort, now changed to a new front facing toward Richmond. All night long we worked, and on the following morning, much to our disgust, our slender protection was taken from us and given up to fresh troops who had been hastily sent up as reinforcements; we who had won the position the day before were removed further to the right into open unprotected ground. There was much unavailing grumbling at this seeming injustice, but the men went heartily to work turning up the fresh earth for new protection. All that forenoon the cloud of dust raised by marching rebel troops, and the gleam of their bayonets were plainly visible, skirting the edge of the woods at no great distance, giving token of dreadful work close at hand. About noon, each man had raised for himself a little mound of earth a few inches in height. At that time a sudden furious

cannonade opened from gunboats, batteries and forts, and soon after the appearance of long lines of Confederate gray, — ten of the choicest brigades in the whole Southern army, under Ewell, and later under Lee himself — at the edge of the woods announced the approaching attack.

The dense lines of gray, with banners flying and uttering their shrill cries, came sweeping swiftly forward. It was a moment of intensest interest. The enemy was but a few yards distant ; already their features were plainly visible, when suddenly came the sharp command "Fire." A sheet of flame leaped from the muzzles of two thousand seven hundred rifles, and that line of gray went down as grass falls beneath the mower's scythe. Broken and shattered the survivors made their way back to the shelter of the woods, followed by a continuous fire from breech-loading rifles.

I well remember the feeling of exultation that found expression in our brigade as they recognized in the lines of the approaching foe a certain Southern regiment which they had often faced on former battle-fields, and against which a peculiarly bitter animosity existed on account of certain atrocities committed on our dead and wounded who had fallen into their hands. So it was with gleeful feelings that this regiment was recognized, and most fearfully were those atrocities avenged. At the roll-call of that Southern regiment at the close of that afternoon's fight, only seven men made answer to their names, while General Clingman's brigade to which it belonged, and upon which our fire was concentrated, was practically annihilated — being either killed, wounded or captured — flags and all.

Meanwhile the enemy reformed his shattered ranks in the woods for a second assault ; but this and a third also met with a like result, being each time effectually repulsed with terrible loss. The Spencer, a breech-loading rifle which could be fired with great rapidity, poured in its constant fire with deadly effect. Some of the Confederate prisoners exhibited great curiosity to

see what they expressed as "that d—d Yankee gun which could be loaded up on Sunday and fired all the week."

At last, realizing that our line could not be broken, and maddened and desperate by failure, they concentrated all their remaining strength and energy for a final assault, and this time directed their attack obliquely upon the division of colored troops at our right. The assault was impetuous in its fury and well-nigh successful. They came to the very foot of the low earthwork, many of them actually clambered over it, and our hearts sank within us when we saw the colored troops give way in terror and confusion. In vain their officers cursed and struck at the men with their swords. A wild panic seemed to have seized them, and the danger of being flanked and taken prisoner seemed imminent to all, when suddenly a color sergeant, a tall, muscular, black fellow, — a typical specimen of his race — sprang upon the low edge of earth, waved the flag about his head, and calling upon his comrades to follow him, leaped boldly down into the midst of the enemy. It was the work of an instant. He lived hardly long enough to touch the ground. We found his body after the fight was over, lying at the bottom of a heap of slain, — blacks and whites together — fairly riddled with bayonet wounds, and the flag all torn and bloody, tightly clenched in his stiffened hands. Poor, despised, unknown image of his Maker! Who would ever have believed this man capable of such sublime courage and heroism? But beneath that black skin there beat a heart as loyal to freedom and as determined to win it for himself and his race as any which stands recorded in the world's history. Who shall dare deny to that poor black, in the face of such devotion and sacrifice, the possession of those qualities which in other races call forth our highest praise and admiration? His example saved the day. His comrades, ashamed of their momentary panic, turned and followed him. With an almost unearthly cry — a cry in which all the agony and despair of centuries of bondage and oppression seemed concentrated, they threw themselves with irresistible

fury upon their foes. No mercy was asked or given on either side, and that evening as I walked over the blood-soaked ground I counted them by the score, black and white, pierced by each other's bayonets.

During this terrific struggle, the troops previously engaged were compelled to remain passive spectators. They could not turn their arms against this swaying mass without equal danger to friend and foe. But so great was their realization of the danger, so keen the anxiety, so doubtful the issue, that every eye was riveted upon it unmindful of the storm of lead and iron that the Confederate sharpshooters and artillery poured upon us from every available point. It seemed impossible in such a storm for any to escape, but happily in a few moments the Confederates broke in disorder and sought safety under the protecting guns of Fort Gilmer, while the Union troops shouted themselves hoarse with delight. From the prisoners we learned that General Lee had commanded in person, that he was deeply disappointed and chagrined at his failure to retake this most important position, and counted its loss an irreparable disaster to the Confederate cause.

The capture of Fort Harrison and the desperate attempt to retake it were among the important battles of the war. As Gettysburg indicates the highest tide-water mark reached by the rebellion, so the capture of Fort Harrison marks the real beginning of the end. This was the first time that the Union army had gained a permanent foothold on the north side of the James River ; the first tightening of that iron grip on the throat of the rebellion which was never to be relaxed until its final death. Henceforth Richmond was in a state of siege ; her steeples almost within sight and her people ever within sound of the Union guns.

A great change had taken place in the sentiments of the people of Richmond even before the date of the storming of Fort Harrison. Before the battle of Gettysburg in July, 1863, high hopes of ultimate success had animated all classes of

the Southern people, and no one, however great the doubts he might have felt, dared to give them open expression. But when Lee's shattered and demoralized battalions came pouring back in wild disorder from that bloody field, the hopes of the South sank never again to rise. They realized then, as never before, the tremendous military strength of the Government, and the determination of the North never to abandon the contest until the recreant states had returned to their allegiance.

The positions of the opposing forces as just described, remained practically unchanged throughout the winter. As was anticipated, the Union batteries threw hundreds of tons of iron into the suburbs of the city, and were replied to with equal vigor by the Confederate guns. For days at a time the shelling was so furious that there seemed hardly any intermission, day or night. Life was rendered a burden, no less from the incessant din than from the constant vigilance required to escape the flying missiles. On the picket line at night we lay wrapped in our blankets, and, unable to sleep, watched the curving lines of fire with which the air was filled, and calculated from the radius of curvature the nearness of the explosion.

The vigilance in both armies was unceasing, and so great was the strain that the health of nearly every one became seriously impaired. All winter long a battle was deemed imminent at any hour. Only two, however, occurred. On October 20th Mr. Davis and General Lee came down within half a mile of Fort Harrison and for five hours discussed the situation. The result was seen a day or two later in a furious attack upon our right flank, which was unsuccessful. It cost the Union army, however, about fifteen hundred lives and the enemy more than twice that number. On the 27th the Union army retaliated, and advanced within four miles of Richmond, one mile nearer than McClellan had advanced in 1862. The attack was repulsed and the troops driven back with heavy loss. The retreat of that night forms one of the darkest pictures of the war. All night long the rain poured in torrents. So deep was the mud

that the roads were almost impassable, and so tenacious that boots and shoes were pulled off and left behind at every step. The darkness was intense and we went floundering slowly along, artillery, infantry, cavalry, wagons, ambulances, all mixed together in inextricable confusion. Many dropped out from sheer fatigue, and either perished in the woods or were captured by the pursuing enemy, the flash of whose rifles every few moments lit up for an instant the otherwise impenetrable darkness. Others were drowned in the swollen streams, or sank helpless in the soft mud which in many places reached nearly to the knees. To add to its misfortunes the column lost its way and came suddenly upon Confederate fortifications, to avoid which it turned aside into the woods and waited for daylight, the wearied men catching a little sleep in a standing position, leaning against the trees. Nothing could be done for the wounded, whose shrieks, as the ambulances went bumping over stumps and stones and sunken logs or were tipped completely over in the mud, were dreadful and heart-rending beyond power to imagine.

The only advantage gained in this reconnoissance was by the cavalry, which secured an advanced position in the recesses of White Oak Swamp on the Charles City road which they held until the end of the war. The effect of these two engagements was extremely disheartening, and hundreds of men and officers were wholly disabled for further service. So few officers were fit for duty that the detail for picket came almost every night, and was especially severe. No sleep was allowed, nor any fires; and whether in drenching rain, blinding snow or sleet, or piercing cold, there was no relief until the twenty-four hours had expired. It seemed cruel to extinguish a trifling fire of dried leaves or twigs that the poor fellows might have kindled behind some sheltering rock, in the small hours after midnight, but the orders were imperative, and it had to be done. It was pitiable to see them rubbing their ears with snow. In many instances they were so benumbed that they could no longer hold the

musket, and many were sent to the hospital disabled for life. It was an experience akin to that which the Continental army endured in the famous winter at Valley Forge, and I am convinced that many of the desertions from our army that winter were for only one purpose. The cheerful fires of the Confederates were too great a temptation, and they went over simply to get warm.

Another order, the violation of which was punishable with death, was against holding any communication with the enemy on the picket line. But the eagerness to exchange newspapers was so great on both sides that this order was often violated. A stump about midway between the two lines was usually selected, and the picket officer on either side, first attracting the other's attention by waving his paper in the air, advanced, laid it on the stump, and returned to his own lines. The other then advanced, took up the paper and left his own, which was again taken by the first. Of course it was agreed that there should be no firing and no treachery on either side. In this way we received the Richmond papers a few hours after their publication, and the enemy were always delighted to receive ours, especially the New York illustrated papers, for their own carefully suppressed the truth and fed their readers with the most preposterous lies. I remember meeting an officer of the 17th Virginia Regiment several times at the stump, and having a little talk with him. He freely acknowledged that the South could hold out but little longer; that it was daily becoming more and more difficult to maintain discipline in their army, and that all were longing impatiently for the end. Even on the picket line where desultory firing was kept up most of the time, intermissions occurred, usually toward the close of a pleasant Sabbath afternoon, when, after dress parade, the bands of both armies approached as near the picket lines as permission allowed, and followed by crowds of listeners who seated themselves upon the ground around, proceeded to fill the air with melody. Patriotic airs were first given. "Yankee Doodle" on the Union side

was followed with "Maryland, my Maryland" from the Confederates. The "Star Spangled Banner" alternated with "The Bonnie Blue Flag"; "Hail Columbia" with "Stonewall Jackson's March," each rendering followed by lusty cheers from their respective adherents, and so on, until as darkness approached and the silent stars came out one by one, and myriads of twinkling lights appeared in thousands of tiny tents stretching away far as the eye could reach, the music took on a different character. The strains of "Annie Laurie" commenced by a band of either side, was quickly taken up by the others, Union and Confederate alike, followed by "The Girl I left behind Me," "Auld Lang Syne," and kindred airs, the impressive silence which pervaded the vast audience showing how deeply these familiar strains had touched all hearts. And when at last the concert closed with "Home, Sweet Home," before the last notes had wholly died away upon the ear, the bugler at some headquarters caught them up and successive bugles sent them on from regiment to regiment, brigade to brigade, division to division, army corps to army corps, until the echoes were lost in the far distance. Then the myriad lights went out, the soldier turned himself anew in his bed of mud, drawing his blanket over his head, perchance to hide the tears that he could not repress, and slept, to dream perhaps of the home and faces he was never to see again.

Amid such scenes the long and dreary winter passed slowly away. As spring approached most of the troops in this vicinity were withdrawn to the extreme left of the line forty miles away where Grant was persistently pushing Lee. This had the effect of greatly thinning our lines, and at once increasing the vigilance and rendering more burdensome the duties. The standing order, day and night, was "Be ready to move at any moment." Desertions from the enemy occurred daily by scores and hundreds, all bringing stories of distress in Richmond.

One by one the avenues of supply to the Confederate capital and army were cut off, and the pressure of want, even hunger,

began to be acutely felt. Sheridan had rendered the fertile valley of the Shenandoah a desert waste. Sherman had cut the Confederacy in twain. His victorious legions marching to the sea had left a wide swath of desolation behind them. The Weldon and South Side railroads running south from Petersburg had both been cut, and but one avenue remained open — the Richmond and Danville road — to feed the almost starving Southern armies.

Everything throughout the South was in the worst possible condition. As rats are said to desert a sinking ship, so the highest among the Confederate officers, seeing clearly the inevitably speedy collapse of the Confederacy, were sending off boxes of gold to Europe and following them just as fast as they could get away. The Governors of several of the Southern States were demanding of President Davis the immediate return of their troops, claiming the same right to secede from the Confederacy as from the old Union. Generals Johnston, Beauregard, and Bragg were without commands, and the country everywhere was filled with deserters from the ranks. They came into our lines almost every night in considerable numbers. From the Richmond papers they often brought with them we learned much of what was going on within the city. Here are a few of the market prices of provisions: Flour, \$1500 a barrel; tea, \$120 per pound; coffee, \$80; butter, \$50; corn meal, \$75 a bushel; cord wood, \$5 a stick; a dress pattern of cheapest calico, \$300; a pair of coarse shoes, \$100; and everything else in like proportion. As the people used to say, they carried their money to market in a basket and brought home their purchases in their pockets. One newspaper article complained of the difficulty of filling the depleted ranks. They even took sick men from their beds, and one case which excited great indignation was that of a poor fellow dying of consumption who was taken from bed, a musket put in his hand, and he was forced into the intrenchments, where in a few hours he died. One editor grows almost hysterical in his gratitude for the gift of a

dozen ruta бага turnips and two quarts of persimmons, and one eminent gentleman on Christmas Day, 1864, entered into a compact with his family that while at dinner no unpleasant word should be spoken and no one should "scramble" for anything on the table. This Christmas dinner consisted of a boiled head of cabbage costing \$12, and bacon costing \$10 per pound. One gentleman told me that his family had not tasted fresh meat for more than a year. The last that he bought had cost \$60 per pound, and even at that price was of very poor quality, while as a substitute for butter they boiled potato skins into a sort of jelly and mixed it with the fat of bacon.

Such was the condition of affairs in Richmond at this time. Finally the morning of Sunday, April 2d, 1865, dawned beautifully bright and clear. All nature teemed with signs of the coming spring. The blue sky, the warm, still atmosphere, the budding trees and songs of birds, the freshening green of the hillsides, all told of the awakening season of life and beauty. Far off in the direction of Petersburg, — southward — the deep booming of heavy cannon came all day to our ears, and we knew that a battle was in progress there. While at breakfast that morning the adjutant said to me, "You will report at brigade headquarters at half-past eight this morning as officer of the picket." Just before starting for the picket line, General Ripley, commanding the brigade, said to me, "You will be especially vigilant to-day, and should you observe anything unusual in the enemy's lines, you will send me word of it immediately." Then I started with the brigade pickets for the outposts.

Our position was in a thin belt of pines from which we could clearly perceive the enemy's works and all his movements. All seemed as usual. Fort Gilmer with its frowning parapet, its heavy battery, the Confederate flag floating from its staff, and the sentinel with musket on his shoulder, pacing the rampart, presented its usual threatening appearance. Groups of Confederate soldiers lounged about the picket fires and the camp, and nothing indicated in any way the near approach of startling

events. About the middle of the afternoon, however, I noticed several army wagons being loaded up and field artillery moving away, and a general air of bustle and activity pervading the enemy's camps. I sent news of this to General Ripley, and received in reply the laconic message "Keep your eyes and ears open." As darkness came on these signs increased. There was a continual rumbling sound as of heavily loaded wagons and artillery ; their bands played louder and later than usual, and their camp-fires seemed to blaze more brightly. There was something ominous in the very air — a feeling that a great crisis was at hand, but of what nature it might be, none could surmise. No man slept that night. Each stood ready, musket in hand, for whatever might happen. At length, at half-past four on the morning of the third, there came a sudden blinding glare of light, a concussion that shook the earth and nearly threw us to the ground, and immediately after the division officer of the day, the lieutenant-colonel of the 5th Maryland Regiment, galloped up and ordered me to advance the picket line, adding that the enemy were blowing up their iron-clads in the river, and it was believed that Richmond was being evacuated. It was but the work of a moment for the men to sling their knapsacks, and deploying them as skirmishers, we cautiously advanced toward the enemy's lines. Their fires were still burning brightly, but not a man was to be seen. Fearing some treachery we approached cautiously, and as we came nearer I perceived small bits of bright-colored cloth attached to slender sticks a few inches above the ground and a few feet apart. These marked the location of buried torpedoes. In their hasty flight they had forgotten to remove these danger signals. Halting the line I called attention to them, bidding the men step carefully — a pressure of only five pounds was sufficient to explode them. All passed through in safety. In another moment we had mounted the parapet of Fort Gilmer and were in the enemy's camp. Evidences of hasty departure were everywhere visible. The ground was strewn with clothing, muskets, canteens, blankets, everything which



could hinder their flight or was not really needed for use. All this was taken in at a glance in passing, and without stopping we pushed rapidly on. From an old negro woman whose cabin stood in the rear of Fort Gilmer, we were directed into the Newmarket turnpike at a short distance on our right, and from this point we marched by the flank instead of being deployed as skirmishers.

Soon we began to meet groups of rebel soldiers — stragglers from their regiments, who gazed curiously at us, and with our men exchanged much good-natured banter and jokes. So desperately hungry were they that many of them offered to trade their rifles for a handful of coffee and a few hardtack. This offer, however, met with scant favor, though the coffee and hardtack were freely bestowed. All along the road were strewn muskets, canteens, haversacks, blankets, and other equipments, and the desertions from the Confederate ranks that morning must have reached many hundreds.

Every moment the light we had seen over Richmond on starting became more and more brilliant. Above it hung great clouds of heavy smoke, and as we drew nearer there arose a confused murmur now swelling into a loud roar and then subsiding, and again swelling like a great tumult of excited voices, while at frequent intervals short, sharp explosions were heard as of the discharge of field artillery. Weary, breathless, hungry, begrimed with dust and perspiration, but eager and excited, we pushed on, and at half-past six o'clock in the morning I stood with about two-thirds of my men on the summit of a hill and looked down upon the grandest and most appalling sight that my eyes ever beheld. Richmond was literally a sea of flame, out of which the church steeples could be seen protruding here and there, while over all hung a canopy of dense black smoke, lighted up now and then by the bursting shells from the numerous arsenals scattered throughout the city. I waited here until the stragglers of my command had come up, then marched down the hill until we came to a little creek, crossed by a few planks

which alone separated us from the city. Two mounted cavalymen stood upon this bridge who said that they had been sent there by General Weitzel with orders to allow no one to cross the bridge until he came up. So there was nothing to do but to wait. The men stacked arms and threw themselves upon the ground. While resting, a rebel iron-clad lying in the James River in full sight blew up with a terrific crash, scattering fragments of iron and timbers all about us, but fortunately no one was hurt. In a few moments more a carriage appeared coming from the city, and stopped directly before us. Beckoning me to approach, the occupant asked if I was in command of the men lying about, and on being answered in the affirmative, he said that he was the mayor of Richmond, and that he wished to make a formal surrender of the city. At the same time he placed in my hands a large package, containing, I presume, official papers, the city seal, keys and other property. I told him that General Weitzel, commanding the department, would be present in a short time and that he would be a proper person to treat with. Even while we were speaking the general and his staff appeared at the top of the hill, and the mayor rode forward to meet him. The whole party shortly returned, and General Weitzel ordered me to follow him into the city.

This I did, but we had not advanced many rods before the smoke became so thick as to make it impossible to see even a few feet in advance, and for this reason, I suppose, I missed the general, he turning to the right towards the upper part of the city, and I to the left towards the river. We had not gone far before I discovered that I had become separated from him, and was uncertain how to proceed, when on a lamp-post at a corner I read the words, "Main Street." Thinking this would at least conduct us to the central part of the city and assist in finding the capitol grounds, I turned into it. The scene that met our eyes here almost baffles description. Pandemonium reigned supreme. Two large iron-clads near by in the river exploded with a deafening crash, the concussion sweeping numbers of

people off their feet. The street we were in was one compact mass of frenzied people, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that we were able to force our way along. Had they been hostile our lives would not have been worth a moment's purchase. But the poor colored people hailed our appearance with the most extravagant expressions of joy. They crowded into the ranks and besought permission to carry the soldiers' knapsacks and muskets. They clapped them on the back, hung about their necks, and "God bless you," and "Thank God, the Yankees have come," resounded on every side. Women, emaciated, barefoot, with but one scanty skirt made from old bags, fell on their knees in the street, and with clasped hands and streaming eyes thanked God that their sufferings were ended at last. Others with little children, wretched little skeletons, clinging to their scanty skirts and crying with hunger and fright, pressed into the ranks and begged most piteously for food. One woman, I distinctly remember, with three little pale, starved girls clinging about her, herself barefoot, bareheaded, thinly and miserably clad, seized my arm with a vise-like grip, and begged for the love of God, for just a morsel for her starving children. They had tasted nothing since Sunday morning, and then only a spoonful of dry meal. I gave her the contents of my haversack, and one man in the ranks, a great, rough, swearing fellow, poured into her lap his entire three days' rations of pork and hard bread, thrust a ten dollar greenback, all the money he possessed, into her hand, swearing like a pirate all the while as a means of relief to his overcharged feelings, their intensity being abundantly evident by the tears which coursed rapidly down his cheeks. I feel sure that the recording angel, as he charged up this man's profanity against him in the book of life, kindly blotted it out with a tear, in consideration of the circumstances which called it forth.

The gutters literally ran whiskey. The members of the City Council, foreseeing the mischief that would ensue should the liquor shops be sacked, had rolled all the barrels to the curb-

stone, knocked in their heads, and emptied their contents into the gutters. The poisonous flood rolled like a river of death rapidly on into the sewers, while the atmosphere fairly reeked with its unsavory odor. The rougher element of the population, white and black alike, were dipping up the vile stuff with their hands, and pouring it down their throats. The shrill whistle of locomotives sounded loud and frequent in the near distance, as train after train hurried away bearing frantic citizens with what valuables they had time to secure. Bands of thieves and rascals of every degree, broken loose from the penitentiary, were entering the stores on either side the street and stealing whatever they could lay their hands upon, while the entire black population seemed out of doors and crazy with delight. Tumult, violence, riot, pillage, everywhere prevailed, and as if these were not enough to illustrate the horrors of war, the roar of the flames, the clanging of bells, and general uproar and confusion were sufficient to appall the stoutest heart. Fearing violence from some unexpected source in the midst of such fearful scenes, I looked about for some avenue of escape into a less crowded street, where I could more easily keep the soldiers apart from the populace, but none presented itself. At length the heat became so great that we could proceed no further. Our hair and beards were scorched, our clothing smoked, the air we breathed was like a furnace blast, and many of the men, weighed down as they were with musket, knapsacks, blanket, ammunition, and other accoutrements, were well-nigh exhausted. Three fire engines were burning in the street immediately before us. On the sidewalk near by lay the bodies of three young girls burnt to a crisp. People jumped from the windows of burning buildings; others with wildly waving arms shrieked for help, not daring to take the fatal leap. On a lamp-post just at my right, I read the words "Fourteenth Street," and turning to a citizen who stood in a porch on the corner, I asked him to direct me to the capitol. "Turn right up here," he said, "go straight on for two or three streets, and you will see it just on your left." He also added

that General Early, at the head of a body of Confederate cavalry, had passed along only a moment before, and with outstretched hand showed us through the smoke the rearmost rank.

Following his directions we soon arrived at the capitol, where arms were stacked, and the wearied soldiers threw themselves upon the ground to rest. It was not long before an orderly from General Weitzel rode up with orders to report to him at once in the house recently occupied by Jefferson Davis, not far from the capitol. Upon presenting myself, I was ordered to patrol the streets of the city with a sufficient number of men, to order all the colored people to their homes, there to remain until further orders, and to arrest every person in Confederate uniform of whatever rank, and bring them to General Weitzel's headquarters. In this work I was busily engaged for nearly three entire days. General Lee's army, after the surrender, poured into Richmond by thousands. The city swarmed with them. We gathered them in from the streets, the saloons, the houses, wherever the homeless, starving wretches could find warmth and shelter. Several times a day I marched down Broad Street at the head of two or three hundred officers and privates, halting for a moment at General Weitzel's door until they could be counted, then continuing on to Libby Prison and Castle Thunder, where they were locked up until the peace and safety of the city were assured, when they were allowed to depart whithersoever they would. During those three days both those historic buildings were literally packed from cellar to roof with Confederate prisoners, a piece of retributive justice which gave solid comfort and satisfaction to all who witnessed it.

The same tumultuous scenes just described were visible throughout the city. The spacious capitol grounds afforded the only spot of refuge, and these were crowded with women and children, bearing in their arms and upon their heads their most cherished possessions. Piles of furniture lay scattered in every direction, and about them clustered the hungry and destitute

family groups, clinging to each other with the energy of despair. One of the most touching sights amid these accumulated horrors, was that of a little girl — a toddling infant — holding her kitten tightly under her arm, a dilapidated rag doll in one hand and grasping her mother's gown with the other, as they sought shelter from the showers of cinders, under the capitol steps.

The constant explosion of ammunition in the arsenals seemed almost like a battle. Many citizens were killed by the flying fragments. Many were burned to death. In one house seventeen people perished from the flames. The sick, the aged, helpless and infirm, left to themselves in the general panic, could only pray for deliverance, which came to them when the flames had stifled their prayers in death.

Seven hundred and fifty thousand loaded shells in the arsenals, exploding from the heat, tore their way through houses, ploughed up the streets and the gardens, and spread death and destruction on every hand. The whole city jarred and vibrated with horrid sounds, while warehouses, stores, mills, bridges, depots, and dwellings went down by scores and hundreds. The streets leading to the railroad stations were filled with a frantic mob, pushing, struggling, cursing, trampling each other without mercy in their efforts to get away with what plunder they could carry. No troops of either army were in sight, only rebel stragglers, whose long familiarity with similar scenes rendered them, no doubt, the only cool-headed and indifferent spectators of these appalling sights. Over and above all the terrible roar of the conflagration as it leaped from building to building, from street to street, filled the whole city with its scorching breath, and lent added horrors to the scene.

Upon starting out on one of these Confederate-arresting expeditions that morning a couple of hours or so after first entering the city, we heard the strains of "Yankee Doodle" by a military band, and looking in the direction from which the strains proceeded, we perceived a column of Union troops just appear-

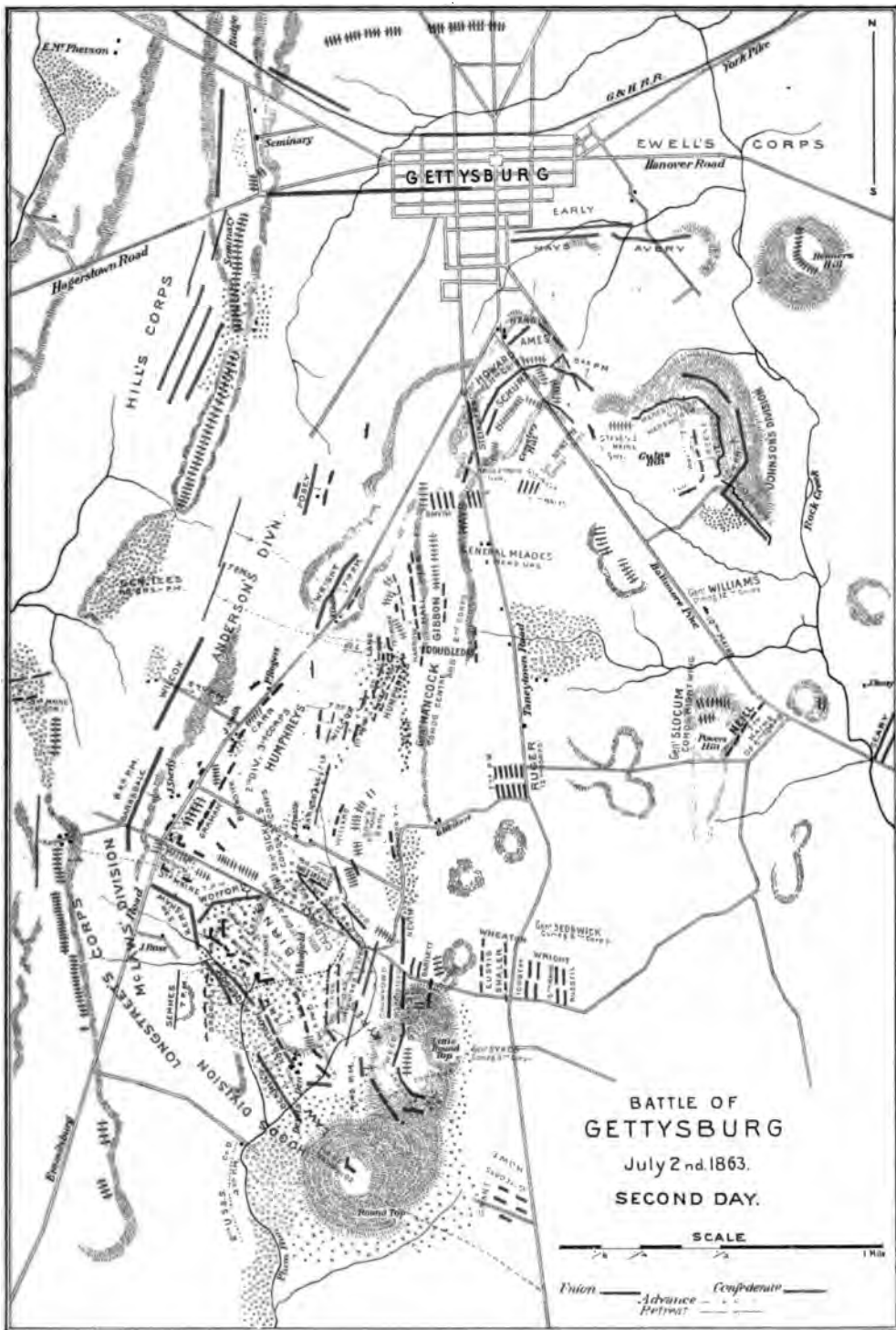
ing at the lower end of the city. A few moments more and a whole wall of shining bayonets came into view just over the brow of the hill flashing brightly in the sunshine, and above them the regimental flags waving in the morning breeze. It was the Third Division of the Twenty-Fourth Army Corps. The First Brigade, General Ripley, led the column, and the 13th New Hampshire, the oldest regiment in the brigade, held the post of honor on the right, and was consequently the first regiment to enter the city. As they came abreast of where we stood I halted my little force and exchanged salutes as they passed. The first duty to which they were assigned was to extinguish the fires which the enemy had kindled, and to aid in restoring order throughout the city. In less than forty-eight hours all this was accomplished. The evil disposed either fled the city or were unearthed from their hiding-places and received swift punishment at the hands of an authority that indulged in no triflings and whose judgments could neither be disregarded nor overruled. Human life and property became in that brief time as safe as in any city in the land, and Richmond enjoyed a safety and repose she had not known for years. Business soon resumed its sway, confidence was restored, and the people exulted openly in their escape from the despotism and outrages which they had experienced from the Confederate authorities. With so much destitution, misery and ruin there was of course great need of immediate relief; and this was freely given. An endless procession of citizens, rich and poor, black and white alike, presented itself daily at the depots for provisions and supplies, and received food, medicine, clothing, care and protection. A guard was placed over General Lee's house when he returned to it a few days after the surrender, and he and his family were protected against intrusion and annoyance. All shared freely in the bounty of the government which they had fought desperately for four years to destroy. History may be searched in vain for a similar illustration of obedience to the divine injunction to forgive and feed one's enemies.

The behavior of the Northern troops was all that could be desired. No brawls, disturbances, or conflicts with the citizens occurred, and ladies walked the streets unattended and in perfect security. The loyal citizens, who all through the war had been suppressed and silent, now uttered their sentiments freely and without fear. The roll of the Northern drum was no sooner heard in the streets than this element broke forth impetuously and greeted it with heartiest cheers ; loyal eyes grew dim at sight of the flag they had so long vainly hungered to behold, and as its protecting folds floated from roof and balcony and window, all rejoiced in its supremacy. Human slavery was forever ended, and God-given Liberty was henceforth the common heritage of all.

THE LEFT ATTACK (EWELL'S) AT  
GETTYSBURG







## THE LEFT ATTACK (EWELL'S) AT GETTYSBURG

BY

BREVET-CAPTAIN EDWARD N. WHITTIER, U. S. V.

THE returns of the First Army Corps for June 30, 1863, give "present for duty equipped" 708 officers and 9,314 enlisted men. Of these, there were 'killed, wounded, or captured,' in the first day's fight at Gettysburg, as nearly as can be ascertained, sixty per cent.

Barely twenty-four hundred fighting men of the corps found their way up the slopes of Cemetery Hill, and formed lines anew in this position, at the close of that first day's desperate struggle. No sight more welcome ever strengthened the hearts of soldiers, than that which burst upon our longing eyes, when, escaping capture in the streets and lanes of Gettysburg, we gained the plateau of East Cemetery Hill. From this high ground which dominated the town and the fields, in all directions save one, there was an unobstructed view of rolling country open and accessible to the fire of our guns. To the north and northeast the town and the scattered buildings along its edge; to the right and east, a great expanse of farming country bisected by Rock Creek, which, flowing in a southeasterly direction, ran nearly parallel to that portion of our front; in the southeast and at a distance of about seven hundred yards, Culp's Hill, bold, rough and densely wooded, rising from the bed of the stream whose tortuous channel skirted its eastern base for nearly three-quarters of a mile, until its southern slopes merged in the swamp, rocky and almost impassable, separating Culp's from Wolf's Hill bristling with the welcome bayonets of the Twelfth Corps. Following a course almost southerly, the Baltimore pike reached nearly to the horizon, covered with fugitives, or

masked by the dust of columns hurrying to the front. To the southwest, the Round Tops, and in the west the splendid spectacle of Buford's cavalry, in lines of battalions in mass, standing steady as if on parade, unshaken and undaunted in face of the advancing victorious Confederate infantry.

But more than this, and of deepest significance to all who saw it, in the center of the plateau was a group of generals with staff officers and orderlies. It was a scene of the utmost activity, yet there was no confusion. The condition was 'changed from that described by General Buford in the morning, when he informed General Pleasanton of the sad tidings of Reynolds's death, adding, "in my opinion there seems to be no directing person," for, in the center of the group, on horseback, unmoved by all the confusion among the retreating soldiers, sat a man, born to command, competent to evolve order out of the chaos, the master of the first position that day found for successful resistance. I shall never forget (for I reported to him for orders) the inspiration of his commanding, controlling presence, and the fresh courage he imparted. I recall even his linen, clean and white, his collar open at the neck, and his broad wristbands rolled back from his firm, finely moulded hand. This was General Hancock.

The spirit of victory, high and controlling, pervaded the army of Northern Virginia, the outgrowth of 'Second Bull Run,' Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and even of Antietam; to which was added the elation arising from the unexpected success of the first day. There was disappointment because of the failure to seize Culp's and Cemetery Hills when these positions were almost in their grasp on the afternoon of the first day. There remained however the assurance that Longstreet could and would attack and break through our left, that no reinforcements could be taken from our center, so closely watched by Hill, and the hope that Meade would be forced to weaken his right to reinforce his left, and diminish the resistance at that point; for it is to be constantly borne in mind in the narration of

the events of the second day, that General Lee had issued orders that our flanks should be attacked simultaneously by Longstreet and by Ewell, while Hill, carefully watching the center, should throw his whole force against that part of our line on the slightest sign of an opportunity, and secure a foothold on the northern slopes of Cemetery Hill. These were the arguments presented to the Confederate leaders, changing the plan adopted at Fredericksburg and leading up to the attacks, one of which I have selected for my subject.

Culp's Hill, of which Early could have taken possession on the first day without striking a blow, rises strong, bold, and precipitous, out of the bed of Rock Creek, about seven hundred yards southeast from East Cemetery Hill. The highest point, about one hundred and twenty rods from the Baltimore pike, is also the most northern, and the ridge, sloping gradually, follows a southeast course until it merges in the swamp, full of large boulders, separating Culp's from Wolf's Hill. The greater part of its northern face and the whole of its eastern slope are heavily timbered, difficult of ascent and exceedingly rocky. The hill commands the valley of Rock Creek, faces Benner's Hill, and completely flanks the plateau of East Cemetery Hill. Some of the Confederate reports mention Culp's Hill as a mountain, and others speak of Rock Creek, or run, as a branch at the foot of the mountain, so high and abrupt did it appear to their officers from the vantage ground of Benner's Hill, and from that which later was known as "Hospital Hill." On the northwestern face of Culp's Hill, on a small knoll, General Hancock had placed the 5th Maine Battery, six 12-pounders, facing the town and commanding the valley separating Culp's and Cemetery Hills, and also the steep acclivities of the eastern face of the spur known as Cemetery Ridge. Joining the right of the battery and extending easterly to the highest point of Culp's Hill, thence southerly along its crest, was Wadsworth's division of the First Corps; later, and joining the right of this small division, the Second Division of the Twelfth Corps swung

into line, the brigade of General Greene of glorious memory, on the division left ; the remainder of the Twelfth Corps, increased by Lockwood's Independent Brigade, lay in a southeast direction, following the crest and the most defensible positions, until the extreme right rested in the low grounds and woods near McCallister's Mill. Lockwood was on the extreme right and refused, nearly touching the Baltimore pike.

The woods covering the greater portion of this part of our line afforded excellent material for the construction of rifle pits, and during the night of the first and the early morning of the second day, men accustomed to woodcraft built log breastworks, felling the trees and blocking them up into a close log fence, battenning with cord-wood from piles close at hand, and surmounting the whole with "head-logs," which later proved of inestimable value in the close contact of the contending forces. So formidable were these works in places, that the Confederates reported them to be log forts requiring scaling ladders for their successful assault. Some of our regiments, more fortunate than others, had picks and spades, and strengthened their works materially with earth. All along the line, earth, logs, boulders, cord-wood, brush, in fact everything that could be made useful, was taken advantage of to complete the line of defence.

About ten o'clock on the morning of the second the line of defence was in a great measure completed, although the men were busied for the larger part of the day, in strengthening angles, and developing salients wherever the ground admitted, and in Greene's lines, under the personal direction of that gallant and most accomplished officer, in constructing a traverse from his right along a ridge which, nearly at a right angle to his front, ran back towards the Baltimore pike. The construction of this supplementary line of defence provoked much complaint from the men, already nearly exhausted by the severe labor of the night and early morning, and seemed at the time uncalled for, so strong were our lines at this point, but the men, who, while toiling under the hot sun, cursed their brigade commander,

before night fell blessed the high soldierly instinct and foresight, which gave protection in the evening when Johnson's victorious columns, sweeping before them the thin line left to hold the rifle-pits vacated by the Twelfth Corps (sent across to reinforce our left hard pressed by Longstreet), turned the right of Greene's brigade, and were held in check at this point by a small force behind the traverse. The great importance of this result will appear later on.

It was after Longstreet's attack had made great headway, that there was presented to our gaze the spectacle of a Confederate battery thrown into "action front" on the ground sloping towards us, and just to the north of the high ground since known as Benner's Hill. It was the initial movement of Andrew's Battalion of Light Artillery of Johnson's division, taking position, closely crowded on the slope and crest of this small knoll. A short distance to the north were two guns of large calibre, 30-pounders, and still farther north, at longer range, rifled batteries were established, all concentrating their fire on East Cemetery Hill, and enfilading our lines along the Northern slope of Cemetery Ridge beyond the burial ground. Six Confederate batteries in all were engaged in this attack.

The reply was quick and effective. Weidrich, Ricketts and Reynolds on the plateau and southern slope of the hill, Taft's 20-pounders back in the cemetery, the 5th Maine smooth bores on Culp's Hill, and two guns of Knapp's Pennsylvania battery on the very crown of Culp's Hill, opened fire. In less than half an hour four of the Confederate limbers or caissons were exploded, the men driven from the guns and the batteries silenced.

Nowhere on the field of Gettysburg was such havoc wrought by artillery on artillery, and the wreck of Andrew's Battalion, in dead horses, shattered guns, and ammunition carriages left on the field, was for months a noteworthy feature. The commanding officer, Major Latimer, died of wounds received here. One captain and one lieutenant were severely wounded, one non-com-

missioned officer and nine enlisted men were killed. Two non-commissioned officers and thirty men were wounded, and thirty horses were killed. In Carpenter's battery alone, five men were killed, nineteen badly, and several others slightly wounded.

Our guns cooled, but hot apprehension seized us, as with our glasses we watched the fearful struggle on the left, our infantry falling back and our lines driven in from the high ground at the Peach Orchard and the Emmetsburg road. About six o'clock, and directly in rear of the position I occupied with the 5th Maine Battery, the Twelfth Corps, at a double quick, poured out of its works in the woods on Culp's Hill, and crossed the Baltimore pike in response to the urgent need and call for reinforcements along the Third and Fifth Corps fronts. Almost at the very hour the Twelfth Corps was vacating the breastworks on Culp's Hill, General Ewell ordered the advance of Johnson's division. This division, in position on the extreme left of the Confederate army and somewhat refused, had during the day occupied the fields in the Culp farm beyond the Hanover road in a general direction northeast from Culp's Hill, and at a distance of a little more than a mile. Jones' brigade had been thrown forward in support of the artillery on Benner's Hill, and halted under cover of a range of low hills about three hundred yards in rear and to the left of Andrew's Battalion.

No one of high rank in the Confederate army knew, as Johnson did, the difficulties in the path of an assaulting column, the vital importance of this position to our army, or the nearness of the prize, the Baltimore pike, to gain which he must exert his best endeavor. On the preceding afternoon, his engineer officer had crossed Rock Creek and with a small force of infantry for protection, scaled the steep acclivities of the eastern face of Culp's Hill, and from its commanding crest looked down upon the narrow line of fields and the pike almost at his feet. He had secured information of the utmost importance ; for within one hundred and twenty rods was the Baltimore turnpike, our line of retreat. Even at that hour its value in such emergency was being

demonstrated, for it was crowded with men and teams, a confused throng, struggling to escape the wreck and havoc wrought by that day of disaster to Federal arms. This officer barely escaped capture. Some of his men were taken prisoners by the skirmishers of the 17th Indiana, while extending our line to the right by General Hancock's orders.

From his position on Benner's Hill, General Johnson had full in his front the wooded outlines of Culp's Hill. Concealed behind this high ridge, but in close and dangerous proximity to it and commanded by it, lay the Baltimore pike, separating the narrow fields on the western slopes of Culp's Hill from the ground holding in dense park our reserve ammunition trains. Could he possess himself of this ridge, he might turn our flank and place his command across the line of retreat for more than two thirds of the Potomac Army.

Through an interval, now closed by trees, in the valley between Benner's and Culp's Hills, our officers on the plateau of East Cemetery Hill had some time before this, caught sight of Johnson's troops passing to our right, and a brisk artillery fire was opened upon them and maintained as long as they were in sight. Crossing Rock Creek by various fords, the enemy reached the base of Culp's Hill, driving in our skirmishers on Greene's front and making a sharp attack on that brigade, which was attempting to obey General Slocum's order "to occupy the breastworks thrown up by the corps." As nearly as can be ascertained this was about half past seven, and Ireland's regiment, the 137th New York, strung out in a thin line of men quite widely separated, had barely time to gain the protection of the breastworks vacated by Kane's brigade on Greene's right, when the enemy attacked most vigorously the whole front with large force, and for nearly an hour the fight to dislodge Greene by a front attack, and to gain possession of his works, was urged with extreme gallantry. The enemy made four distinct charges between 7.30 and 9 P.M., and was repulsed with great loss. Soon after he appeared in force on the right flank of Ireland's

regiment, which had been reinforced by a regiment sent from the Eleventh Corps. As the enemy advanced, this regiment broke and fled, placing Greene's right in a most critical position. Colonel Ireland met the flank attack with bravery and soldierly skill, forming his right company at right angles with the breast-works and checking by a stubborn resistance the movement on his flank. He held his ground until the heavy loss in killed and wounded by a fire from three sides, forced him back to the works occupied by his brigade. Here he formed line behind the traverse built by General Greene in the early part of the day, which now served its grand purpose, by arresting at once all further movement against this portion of our line. I doubt if in any part of the field to-day, the soldier and the student of the history of this desperate conflict, lingers longer or more fondly than about the fast fading traces of this traverse on the right of General Greene's line, built in the quiet of the morning of the second day, a strong line of defence in the gloom of impending disaster when night closed on the doubtful issue of the Confederate assaults on the right of our line on Culp's Hill.

In the early part of the attack, General Greene had sent urgent requests for help to General Wadsworth, on his immediate left, and to General Howard on Cemetery Hill. These officers responded promptly, sending six regiments, aggregating seven hundred and fifty-five men all told. Good service was rendered by these most welcome reinforcements, in relieving the regiments whose ammunition had been used up or whose rifles had fouled. Greene's brigade, with unflinching courage, maintained its desperate position during the series of attacks lasting two and one half hours, in the face of vastly superior numbers. The large number of Confederate dead and wounded close up under the works attested their high valor. This determined resistance compelled the enemy to discontinue the attack about 10 P.M., but he remained in occupancy of that part of the ridge and of the works vacated by the First Division, Twelfth Corps, as well as the works built by Candy's and Kane's brigades, Second Division.

General Greene still bravely held his original front, with the 137th New York at right angles to the rest of the brigade, behind the traverse. Kane's brigade, returning about 9 P.M., when within two hundred paces of the breastworks, received a sharp fire, which at the time was supposed to come from the First Brigade (Candy's), misled by the darkness. The men were ordered not to reply, and were withdrawn to the turnpike, where a staff officer of General Greene, sent for the purpose, advised Colonel Kane that the intrenchments were in possession of the enemy. About one o'clock on the morning of the 3d, Candy's brigade, which had been held in readiness in the fields across the Baltimore pike, crossed that road and took position in a double line along a narrow lane, the right resting in an orchard near the house of Henry Spangler. This position was somewhat screened from the enemy's observation by woods, and the various alignments were made with the utmost quiet within a few rods of the enemy's line.

During the night prisoners from the forces occupying our breastworks were brought in, — they were from Stewart's and Jones' brigades; and our men deployed as skirmishers, carefully feeling their way, and exchanging frequent shots with the enemy, reported that our works to the south of the "Swale" were unoccupied. A few prisoners were taken there also, presumably from scouting parties of the enemy, but Co. F, 2d Massachusetts Infantry, skirmishing, developed a large force of Confederates in our works to the north of the "Swale," and having advanced into the woods, where in the darkness it was impossible to tell friend from foe, found itself in the midst of a brigade of the enemy's troops. Here it captured twenty-three prisoners, among them a captain, and brought all in with a loss of only two men.

Our right flank was once more guarded. The night advanced, broken by occasional volleys from Greene's front on the eastern face of Culp's Hill, and scattering shots from the angle, and along the traverse. Through the woods, among the

wounded between the lines, brave men crept over the great rocks and fallen trees, bearing grateful sustenance to their suffering comrades. The clear, cool waters of Spangler's spring reflected in the moonlight, in turn, Confederate and Union soldiers ; for scouting parties from each side between midnight and early dawn, filled their canteens and quenched their thirst where to-day the hands of children welcome veterans revisiting the hard fought field.

I will go back to the early evening of the second day, and before describing Early's assault on the east face of Cemetery Hill, will give the designation and position of our troops there.

Slopes of considerable ruggedness, overtopped here and there by steep acclivities, with intervening open fields irregularly broken by stone walls, rendered the position easy to defend against any direct attack from the north, but the declivities of the east face of Cemetery Hill were so abrupt, falling sixty-four feet in the first hundred yards and one hundred and forty feet in the first seven hundred, that the guns on the plateau were wholly unprotected in event of assault from the east, unless infantry, placed behind the stone wall at the base of the hill, should possess staying qualities of a high order. Whether they did or did not, let the narrative answer.

The Count of Paris regards the position of Cemetery Hill as completing the strategic advantages, in a tactical sense, presented by Gettysburg, for it commands the town and all the roads adjoining it.

The disposition of the troops on the evening of the second day was as follows : Beginning with the left of the line, resting on the Baltimore pike, which crosses the highest part of East Cemetery Hill, was Ames's division, the 107th and 25th Ohio facing north, and 75th Ohio and 17th Connecticut facing east. These troops were under the immediate command of Colonel Harris of the 75th Ohio. Joining this brigade was the left of Von Gilsa's brigade, the 8th and 54th New York, refused, and facing southeast ; the three remaining regiments were in position

fronting east, and behind a stone wall lower down, and at the base of the hill. On the plateau and high above the infantry were B Battery, 4th Artillery, four guns, straddling the pike near the cemetery gate and looking down into the town, fronting north; Battery I, 1st New York Light Artillery, Weidrich; Batteries F and G (consolidated), 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery, Ricketts', facing east; and a short distance down the southern slope and at the head of the valley separating East Cemetery from Culp's Hill, Battery L, 1st New York Artillery, four guns. Back of Weidrich and Ricketts, in the cemetery, were two 20-pounders, Taft's Independent New York Battery, also facing east. The infantry interval at the base of the hill, from the right of Von Gilsa's, was taken up on the extreme right, just at dusk, by the 33d Massachusetts, Colonel Underwood, the extreme right of his regiment resting at the foot of the knoll occupied by the 5th Maine Battery. Underwood's command faced east northeast.

The batteries on the plateau facing east were placed a short distance back of the crest behind earthworks, the condition of which to-day bears witness to their thorough construction at Steinwehr's hands. All these guns were long range, having as their objective the high ground occupied by the Confederate infantry and artillery on the other side of Rock Creek, and the rolling fields at a distance of eight hundred to one thousand yards between the Creek and the edge of the town. These batteries had absolutely no point blank, and were prevented by the sharp descent of the eastern face of the hill, from exerting any control over that portion of his front which an artillerist holds as his dearest possession, leaving in its place a "dead angle," large and of terrible significance, in the place of ground where guns can vex and tear assaulting columns with canister; but on a small knoll half way along the northern face of Culp's Hill, which projects at this point like a salient from our lines, and about three hundred and fifty to four hundred yards to the right and somewhat advanced from the plateau of East Cemetery Hill,

General Hancock had placed a battery of 12-pounders, the 5th Maine, well known at that time as "Leppien's old battery."

The guns of this battery could reach Benner's Hill and commanded the valley and wooded banks of Rock Creek, and the farm lands of William Culp between Benner's Hill and the edge of the town, and, by swinging the trails sharp to the right, the steep acclivities of East Cemetery Hill were within canister range. The fields at the foot of the hill, inaccessible to the guns on the crest, could be swept clean of any troops assailing our front at that point by an enfilading fire of double canister.

On the right of the battery and facing north, Wadsworth's division prolonged the line to the top of Culp's Hill, where the front again faced the east, and the right of the division joined Greene's brigade, holding the left of the Twelfth Corps line.

Johnson's attack on the east face of Culp's Hill was pressing with great force and violence on Greene's front within a few hundred yards of the right of the battery, then under my command; and because it seemed that the enemy would certainly break through our line at this point, the right half battery was changed to fire right oblique, and canister was brought into the works; for the distance to the woods was too short for easy service of ammunition from the limbers of the pieces. It was close to quarter of eight, the sun had dropped behind the Cumberland mountains, and the dusk of evening was creeping through the valley of Rock Creek, when we made out the enemy deploying into line at a distance of a thousand yards, and forming near the house and farm buildings of William Culp on the outskirts of the town. This was the assaulting column of Early's division, Hays' brigade, "Louisiana Tigers," and Hoke's brigade of North Carolinians, with Gordon's brigade well closed up in reserve. Their right rested on the town and the left on Rock Creek, near the foot of Benner's Hill, their objective point being East Cemetery Hill by a right half wheel pivoting on the town.

A French "ordnance" glass, the nearest approach to a

"range finder" for light artillery at that time known, had, that afternoon, given me the distance of all prominent landmarks in my front, and acting under the permission of the chief of artillery, kindly granted, I had proved the accuracy of the glass by solid shot. The clump of buildings on the Culp farm was one of the best defined objects in range, and as quickly as the enemy appeared, even while his lines were forming, the battery opened with spherical case, each one bursting as if on measured ground, at the right time and in the right place in front of their formation. This was the first intimation given by artillery of the Confederate advance. General Underwood afterwards kindly wrote me of his feelings on that occasion. "I had just placed my regiment, the 33d Massachusetts, behind the stone wall at the foot of a hill and faced northeast, and had no knowledge that the enemy was advancing, when suddenly, right over my head, it seemed, there was a blaze, a crash, and a roar, as if a volcano had been let loose." It was six 12-pounders firing by battery almost simultaneously; in another moment the battery was "firing at will," and Weidrich, Ricketts, and Reynolds on the plateau and slope of East Cemetery Hill, volleyed and thundered.

This movement of Early's was a noteworthy example of the independent action of division commanders, keeping pace with the departure by the corps commanders from the orders of the General-in-chief that the flank attacks, Longstreet's and Ewell's, should be made simultaneously, and that the three divisions of Rodes, Early and Johnson, should move at once and the same hour, Early and Johnson to the direct assault, Rodes from his position in the town, close up under our guns, to seize upon the opportunity which any change in the Union forces on the northern slopes and ridge of Cemetery Hill might give to effect lodgment there. Waiting until Johnson had gained our works, Early did not move his division until nearly or quite 7.45. Delayed by the twilight obscuring the ground in their front; by the difficult passage over rolling farm lands and fields shut

in by stone walls which broke up their alignments ; by loading and firing as they advanced ; delayed perhaps by the fire of sixteen guns directly in their front, on the plateau of East Cemetery Hill, and the fire of the six light twelves on Culp's Hill on their flank, nearly an hour was consumed in passing over the seven hundred yards between their starting point and the fields within short range of our infantry posted behind the walls at the base of East Cemetery Hill.

Early's movements, up to within a very short time of his final repulse, were guided by the movements and position of his right flank ; the initial command, "right half wheel guide right," having been, as accurately as could be in the rapidly increasing darkness, strictly complied with ; but, when Hoke's brigade, having the left of the line and constantly increasing in the tendency to "refuse" as it came more and more under the persuasive influence of the 5th Maine's guns, had reached the low bottom of the valley separating Culp's from East Cemetery Hill, Colonel Avery, (in command since Hoke's severe wound at Chancellorsville), finding his men too far to the left of the position they had been ordered to assault, ordered a change of front and wheeled his brigade to the right, a movement which none but the steadiest veterans could execute under such circumstances. It was in this movement that the enemy swept past the left flank of my guns within short canister range ; shutting out the right half battery so that these guns could not be brought to bear on those troops which were hastening to gain a new position and to re-form on ground from which they could, with better hope, charge the crest of East Cemetery Hill. The trails of the left half battery were swung sharp and hard to the right, the right half battery was hastily "limbered to the rear," and in the darkness, hurried to a new position on the left of the guns remaining in the works, so that the whole battery was once more effective, and this time, with double canister, pouring a most destructive, enfilading, demoralizing, fire into a confused mass of the enemy, struggling in the uncertain shadows at the

base of the hill ; for Avery's change of front brought his men in a body, tangled and confused, among the men of Hays' command, with which, up to the time of this to them most unfortunate change of front, they had maintained some semblance of alignment. General Hays, in his report to General Early, writes, "The enemy's artillery, now within canister range, opened upon us, but owing to the darkness of the evening verging into the night, and the deep obscurity afforded by the smoke of the firing, our exact locality could not be discovered by the enemy's gunners, and we thus escaped, what, in the full light of day, could have been nothing else than horrible slaughter."

Meanwhile our batteries on the crest of East Cemetery Hill were powerless. Breck's (Reynolds') four guns on the southern slope, did not use canister, for fear of our men at that time thought to be behind the walls in his front ; while the "dead angle" made by the abrupt slopes of Cemetery Hill had been changed, by the act of General Hancock, who placed the 5th Maine light twelves on the side of the salient created by the north face of Culp's Hill, into a most deadly angle ; for the brave men, charging across our front, were forced to yield to the inexorable fate which surely awaited whatever body of troops the enemy chose to hazard within double canister range of the smoking muzzles of a well drilled 12-pounder battery. It was this same battery, the 5th Maine, which was mentioned first in the list of the fourteen batteries selected from all the batteries, volunteer and regular, of the Potomac Army for proficiency and promise, in General Orders No. 18, Headquarters Army of Potomac, March 3, 1863.

It was our turn that night, for on the previous day we had been flanked out of our position on Seminary Ridge at the Seminary buildings, where we had faced three successive charges of Daniels' and Scales' brigades, each time driving them back with canister, but only after we had each time lost them in the smoke of our guns.

The 33d Massachusetts at the left of the battery, by an

oblique fire, and on the right of the guns, the survivors of the first day's fight of the "Iron Brigade," by an enfilading fire, rendered loyal service. This brigade on the first day, lost 64 $\frac{3}{8}$  per cent, one regiment, the 24th Michigan, 84 $\frac{4}{8}$  per cent, in killed, wounded, and missing; of these last, but few ever again answered the roll-call, for they also were "dead on the field of honor." These small regiments constituted the only infantry force effective on that part of our lines that night. Von Gilsa's brigade, Eleventh Corps, behind the stone walls at the base of East Cemetery Hill, broke and left its front open. When this was discovered, the 17th Connecticut was ordered to the ground vacated by Von Gilsa. Through the opening in our lines caused by this change of position of the 17th Connecticut the few Confederates who succeeded in reaching the crest found their way, and in the rush for the crest, and the guns there, the enemy struck the right of the 75th Ohio, breaking off two companies and swept them along in their headlong charge. The remainder of the 75th Ohio changed front to rear on the third company, now on the right of the Regiment, and held firm place. Weidrich's and Ricketts' batteries were overrun and the guns seized, the left piece of Ricketts' was spiked, but the cannoneers fought the enemy hand to hand with trail handspikes, rammers, and what few pistols they had, and succeeded in checking them for a moment, when Carroll's brigade, sent unasked, by General Hancock's happy inspiration, advancing by front of a single regiment, charged across the small space, drove the enemy from our guns and down the slopes. The position was saved.

It was believed at the time, and for several years afterwards, that the enemy were in such force, and had gained such foothold on the crest of East Cemetery Hill, that except for the reinforcement of Carroll and of Carroll's brigade, the position could not have been retaken that night, if at all. That officer, distinguished then and frequently afterwards for acts of great gallantry, should be given full credit for the courage of his convictions at the time he led his small brigade by regimental front,

up the slopes, in the dark, seeking close contact with the enemy's line and driving straight to the mark, shown only by the spiteful spitting of rifles a few paces to his front, for the plateau was only one hundred and ten paces in width at this point. But now, from the reports only recently accessible, we must accept as final the fact, that of all the men in the two brigades leading the Confederate assault only eighty-seven found the way to the top of the crest, and that these few brave men in the darkness, "travelling in the line of least resistance," stumbled upon the gap in our infantry lines made by the moving of the 17th Connecticut to the place where Von Gilsa's brigade had just demonstrated their lack of staying qualities. This was the place the enemy came through; it was opposite this point, and a few paces further on, that they struck the left of Weidrich's battery, where I am unable to find that they met with much resistance, or indeed until, sweeping down the line of the guns, they came in contact with the left of Ricketts' battery next beyond. Here a first-class fight was served out to them, Ricketts' cannoneers contesting every inch, and defending the position with trail-handspikes, spongers and rammers, rock, and whatever else they could find on the ground, so well that only one of Ricketts' guns, the left one, was under the absolute control of the enemy.

It was now sharp nine. Carroll had swept the plateau clean of Confederates, and the enemy retreating down the slopes was picking his way in the darkness as rapidly as he could, over the rough, rocky ground and stone walls separating him from the safe shelter of the wooded banks of Rock Creek, and the fields of the Culp farm beyond. All firing ceased, but rumor has it that a new fight was on. The fiery spirit of the gallant Carroll "flamed to its height." Bent on maintaining the safety of this key to our position, conquered, as he believed, from a victorious foe by the high valor of the force he had led, he was ready to fight with his three small regiments the whole of Ames' division, Eleventh Corps, for possession of the lines it had failed to de-

fend, and for whose failure his headstrong, indomitable courage knew no excuse. His anger found utterance in words which these pages may not venture to chronicle ; his warlike rage found no vent in the language of the schools, but rather in that of the barracks, and with the memory of Chancellorsville rankling in his breast, he emptied the vials of his wrath on the devoted heads of the Eleventh Corps officers, high in rank, sparing none of those gathered about him. He was with much difficulty persuaded to yield the point he had made, as well as the lines he sincerely believed he had conquered the right and the high privilege to defend until daylight. Calling off his men, already on the hot scent of a new fight, with curses loud and deep for the part played that evening by the Second Division, Eleventh Corps, he at length returned to his own command, and to the chief whose genius never shone more brightly than it did that night when he sent this fighting brigade to the rescue of East Cemetery Hill. Dear old "Sprig Carroll," bravest of the brave ! the roll of heroes of the Second Corps bears no more gallant name than thine !

Paralleling the difficulty in determining the precise strength of Confederate forces at any one time or place, is that of finding out their losses in killed, wounded and captured. The discrepancies between the reports of subordinates, and that of the medical director, are so great as to compel the conclusion that there was a deliberate intention to conceal, and to conceal forever, the losses actually sustained.

The assaulting column from Early's division, not including Gordon's brigade, though this force was close up to the line of Hays' and Avery's (Hoke's old command), was not far from sixteen hundred strong ; braver troops than those of Louisiana and North Carolina never went into position in line of battle, and these stood elbow to elbow in their desperate undertaking. The Medical Director, Army of Northern Virginia, concedes in his final report the loss of six hundred and fifty-eight in these two brigades, almost all killed or wounded, but few missing. Hoke of Chambersburg, whose history of the battle is most

interesting and painstaking, writes me that Hays' and Avery's brigades sustained but slight loss at any other period than during their charge on East Cemetery Hill. Their loss at this time was upwards of forty per cent. General Doubleday did us the honor of writing, that the enemy was repelled, or rather crushed, in his attempt to make permanent lodgment among the Eleventh Corps on Cemetery Hill, and that the enfilading fire from our battery was so destructive and well directed, that only a remnant of Avery's and Hays' brigades returned to their original position in line.

We now approach the third section of this, the Left Attack at Gettysburg, the part taken by Rodes' division of the Second (Confederate) Corps, with the support from Pender's division of the Third Corps (Hill's).

Rodes' division, the largest but one in the Army of Northern Virginia, numbering eight thousand five hundred effectives, occupied the town and the Chambersburg pike as far back as Seminary Ridge. Orders had been received by General Rodes requiring him to co-operate with the forces attacking our right as soon as an opportunity should offer for doing so with good effect. Some stir in our lines opposite Rodes' front, late in the afternoon, causing a diminution of artillery and infantry, led him to seek out General Early with a view to acting in concert with him. These officers agreed as to the fitness of the opportunity for attacking, and each made preparations accordingly. It must be borne in mind that this joint assault was to be made by Rodes and Early, by the latter on the east face, and by the former on the northern slopes of Cemetery Hill, from such directions as to expose our lines to a flank and enfilading, as well as to a direct fire, Early's assault flanking the northern slope and Rodes the eastern face of the hill. It is a curious fact, easily verified, that lines let fall perpendicularly from the center of each attacking division will intersect within two hundred feet of the highest point of Cemetery Hill.

But, at the time described by General Rodes in his report, there took place an exhibition of that spirit of independence so

prevailing and so prominent among the brigadiers of Lee's army.

Ramseur, holding the right of Rodes' division with the understanding that the other brigades were to conform to his movements, obeyed the order to advance, until he was within two hundred yards of our lines on the northern slope, when he discovered (so he reports) "batteries so placed as to pour upon his lines, direct, cross and enfilading fires. Two lines of infantry behind stone walls and breastworks were also discovered, supporting the batteries." He halted his brigade, conferred with the nearest brigadier, General Dole, the whole line governed itself accordingly, the forward movement was arrested, and with it all opportunity of acting in concert with General Early. It was during the time thus wasted, and the critical moment in which the large masses of Pender and Rodes were halting uncertainly almost within our lines, that Carroll, moving by his right flank, covered the rear of the position upset by Early on East Cemetery Hill, and threw his brigade on the troops of Hays and Avery (Hoke's old brigade). "The action," writes General Walker, "was short, sharp and decisive. Hays and Avery were thrown out by Carroll's impetuous attack, and Gordon's brigade advancing to their support, met them retreating down the slope. Thus the Eleventh Corps position was restored and its guns retaken. Early's assault on the eastern face of Cemetery Hill having failed, Rodes' and Pender's attack was abandoned."

It is extremely difficult at this late day, for me to discriminate between facts well known at the time or shortly after the battle, and sustaining important relation to the events of the second and third days, and the knowledge since then acquired from the literature of the theme, but I am assured by friends whose opinion I am bound to respect, that the largest and best result will be attained when the narrative of personal observation and participation is rounded out by a synopsis of clearly ascertained, and definitely determined, historical facts.

The literature of the battle divides itself, we may say, into

three sections, the historical, the oratorical, and that which is synchronal with the event itself ; but the oratorical bears about the same relation to the stubborn facts, that Rothermel's picture painted for the State of Pennsylvania sustains to the reality of the central feature of the fight, for the painting serves chiefly to bring to the front the part alleged to have been borne by the Corn Exchange Regiment of Philadelphia, on the third day.

The change in the understanding reached at Falmouth, in the Confederate Council of War, that the campaign if made into Pennsylvania, should be offensive in strategy, and defensive in tactics, was supplemented by Lee's disregard of Longstreet's advice at Gettysburg, that the army should be thrown around our left flank, and interposed between our position and Washington. If we take it for granted that no disappointment, not even this two-fold failure to influence his General-in-chief, could have made Lee's greatest Lieutenant lukewarm and sluggish, we cannot overlook the fact, the subject of much controversy in Confederate high circles after the battle, that Longstreet began his attack too late in the afternoon of the second day ; and, disregarding this fact, evident at the time, failed to engage the whole of McLaw's division, in time to support that of Hood, barely defending with success the great advantage gained by it, at the Peach Orchard and Devil's Den. Rodes and Early did not move simultaneously against the northern front and easterly face of Cemetery Hill, as had been ordered. Hill's corps, occupying the Confederate center, afforded no material aid to the troops engaged on its right and left. A portion of Edward Johnson's division, forcing back the thin line and small detachments of part of Greene's force, gallantly but ineffectually resisting, gained possession of works on the right of our line, and penetrated beyond to within two hundred yards of the Baltimore pike within easy musket shot of our reserve ammunition train and stopped there, though meeting with no resistance to further progress ; while their division commander, in undisputed possession of a wide path straight into the rear of our center, and within less

than a mile of Army Headquarters, turned to one side and expended the hours of the early part of the night, in fruitless assaults on a position the strength of which had been demonstrated as soon as his brigades had faced the fire of its defenders. Smith's brigade, detached from Early's division to watch a body of our cavalry on the York road, was not within supporting distance of Hoke's and Hays' brigades at the time of their grand assault on East Cemetery Hill in the dusk of that memorable evening. The Confederate movements at Gettysburg were broken, disjointed, and unconnected. In fact, Lee's lieutenants could not, or would not, obey his commands to move simultaneously against our flanks, while Hill was directed at the same time to seize every opportunity to crush our center ; for, writes the Count of Paris, "the extreme independence of the Confederate corps commanders, which division and brigade generals imitated in their turn, rendered the best conceived plans and the most daring efforts fruitless."

"At eight o'clock in the evening," spoke Mr. Everett at Gettysburg, "a desperate attempt was made by the enemy to storm the position of the Eleventh Corps on Cemetery Hill ; here, too, after a terrible conflict, he was repulsed with immense loss. . . . Such was the result of the second act of this eventful drama. A hard day fought, at one moment anxious, crowned with dearly earned but uniform success to our army, auspicious of a glorious termination of the final struggle. On these good omens the night fell."

These glowing words spoken by Mr. Everett in his Gettysburg oration, at the time of the dedication of the National Cemetery, November 19, 1863, are highly oratorical, but cannot be regarded as historical, for when the night fell on the second day's fight the omens were not good, they were bad. The First Corps had left sixty per cent, the Eleventh Corps, thirty-three per cent, and the Third Corps, thirty-eight per cent, dead and wounded on the field, or prisoners in the enemy's hands ; throngs of stragglers had not yet fallen into line, while along our right flank,

and a mile in rear of our right center, rebel yells and the rattle of musketry awoke the slumbering echoes of Culp's and Wolf and Powers' Hills ; the night fell on a loss inflicted by the enemy, of more than twenty thousand men, without counting the men dispersed by the contest and not yet able to rejoin their colors. The conviction was strong that the enemy had not yet spoken his last word ; while General Meade was made to fear that another day's fighting, equally murderous, might cause his whole army literally to melt away.

General Walker will recognize his words expressive of the opinion at that hour prevailing. "The fall of night found the Potomac army in a situation that demanded the most grave and serious consideration. We had repulsed the last assaults, but nearly twelve thousand men had fallen in the desperate battle of the afternoon. Our whole left had been driven back to the position assigned in the morning ; the two corps chiefly engaged, the Third and the Fifth, had been shockingly depleted, the enemy had taken advantage of the absence of the greater part of the Twelfth Corps, to push around our right and seize a part of our line, holding there an open gateway through which their troops could be advanced to seize the Baltimore pike. It was indeed a gloomy hour when General Meade summoned his corps commanders to consider upon the situation and to form plans for the morrow. For these weighty reasons, as night fell, and before the fight on our right which gave the enemy possession of the works at that point had been fully decided, a council of war was called to decide the question of remaining or retreating, and if it should be decided to remain, should the army await or should it deliver attack."

These then were the omens on which that night fell, and the ranks were re-formed among the dead and wounded, too numerous to receive attention at the time. Men took position in silence, for the exultation of victory was not felt to cause them to forget fatigue, hunger, suffering comrades, or the chance of death on the coming day. Words were never spoken more

clearly expressing the anguish of brave men's hearts, than those of the gallant Birney, who, while watching the small numbers of determined soldiers gathering about him, in the gloom of the night, whispered to one of his Lieutenants, "I wish I were already dead." The facts are hard, cold and incontestable. The twilight shrouded a field hard fought, dearly won, barely held, drenched with blood; and upon tokens presaging evil to the Potomac Army.

The moon, then at her full, lighted the valleys and the fields around Gettysburg, favoring the march of troops of both armies hurrying towards our right. "About half-past one, Daniels' and Rodes' old brigades began their march of about four miles," so writes General Daniels, "to reinforce Johnson. Smith's brigade, detached on the previous afternoon to watch our cavalry menacing the enemy's left, was also put in motion for the same point on Johnson's line, while the 'Old Stonewall Brigade,' drawn in from a position where it had been placed to guard Johnson's left flank, rejoined the command." In all, Johnson had in his command when dawn broke, ten thousand five hundred effectives, close to our lines, or in full possession of the major part of our works vacated in the afternoon of the second day. On our part, the troops returning during the night had re-occupied the small portion of our intrenchments not held by the enemy.

In the woods, on the hill south of the swale, near the extreme right of our line, Colgrove's brigade rested on Rock Creek, with skirmishers in the woods beyond. McDougall's brigade on his left extended as far as the Baltimore pike, facing nearly north. On the other side of the swale, and beginning at the Baltimore pike near Henry Spangler's house, Lockwood's Independent Brigade was on the right of a line which made up of that brigade and Candy's and Kane's, prolonged the line to that of the regiment forced behind the traverse on Greene's right, when it was assaulted by Jones' and Stewart's brigades of Johnson's command in the early part of the previous night; these regiments faced east of south. On the narrow western slope of

Culp's Hill, and in the fields near the Baltimore pike, Shaler's brigade of the Sixth, stood in columns of regiments near Greene's right. In the woods and on the hillsides northeast of the meadow and swampy ground, and extending along the whole eastern face of Culp's Hill, was Johnson's command, in close column, waiting for light to enable them to renew the struggle for the possession of the Baltimore pike. On our side, the night had been spent in well-directed, though hurried efforts, to so strengthen our position that it could resist successfully the assault which was certain to come as soon as dawn should reveal to the enemy how near they were to their goal, the main avenue of retreat for more than two-thirds of the Army of the Potomac. On the western side of the Baltimore pike, beginning with three batteries (Winegar, Knapp and Rigby) on Powers' Hill, with K of the 5th Artillery one hundred and twenty rods to the north, and, a little further on, Mühlenberg's F of the 4th Artillery, five batteries in all, were in position parallel to the pike and directly opposite the center of the Twelfth Corps line. Their guns controlled the approaches of the enemy through the ravine formed by the curving channel of Rock Creek, and by means of the swale leading from the bed of the stream out on to the open ground close to the pike.

General Lee, deceived by the result of Longstreet's assault at the Peach Orchard and at the Devil's Den, and particularly by the success attained by the brigades of Anderson near Zeigler's grove, and encouraged by the strong foothold secured within our lines by Johnson's division, decided to resume in the early morning of the third day the movements of the previous afternoon and evening, adhering to the tactics of a double attack with his two wings. Ewell was notified that the battle would be renewed by Longstreet at daybreak, and he was ordered to attack at the same time the positions adjacent to the large part of our intrenchments which his troops already held.

Because the reinforcements of the night gave Johnson an assaulting column which might, by its sheer weight, crush oppos-

ing lines, no thought appears to have been given by the general to the necessity of artillery support, other than to trust to the fortunes of war, and to the high hope which gave shape to his plans, that sufficient gain to the Confederate front could be made to enable them to place their guns on the hill southwest and across the Baltimore pike. But the ground in Johnson's front and on his left, over which the artillery must pass in order to keep within call, if his movements should be successful, afforded no passage for guns. It was the same swampy, wooded, boulder covered and boulder broken country extending to the base of Wolf and McAllister's hills which had been carefully examined by General Slocum and General Warren on the morning of the second. They reported it as impassable for artillery, and unfit for the movement ordered by General Meade, that the Twelfth, Fifth and Sixth Corps should move past our right and attack the Confederate left. If Johnson knew these facts they may not have seemed to him to present material objection to this plan of battle, for he was leading Stonewall Jackson's old corps, men who had been taught by that illustrious chief that a flank position in their hands outflanked the enemy and gave victory.

General Lee had ordered the movements for the morning of the third day to be an attack at daylight delivered simultaneously by both wings of his army, and if either of our flanks should be driven in, an assault by the whole of Hill's corps from the rebel center, with Zeigler's grove as its objective point.

At 4.30 A.M., the artillery of the Twelfth Corps opened at a range of six hundred to eight hundred yards. To those of us whom the last hours of the night held in their soft embrace, the awakening was violent and startling, for twenty guns converged and crossed their fire on the intrenchments seized by the enemy, while the guns on Powers' Hill enfiladed the eastern face of Culp's Hill. Johnson's left was menaced by that portion of the First Division, Twelfth Corps, which was in the woods and

rough ground south of the swale. Geary's division threatened the enemy's right, but their front was open, and just beyond, almost in their grasp, it might appear, was the pike, covered with wagons and moving troops, apparently pushing to the rear as if already in retreat. It had been planned that our infantry should be moved forward as soon as our guns opened; but the ground our men would have to pass over was so exposed to the projectiles from our batteries, even then firing over our own troops, that there was some delay, which gave Johnson opportunity for the initiative. As soon as it was light enough to maintain alignments, he hurled his battalions, in lines scarcely separated, straight at the works which on Greene's front had resisted his efforts the night before. Stimulated by the knowledge of the nearness of the Baltimore pike, the Confederates charged with extreme vigor.

"The shock," writes the Count of Paris, "was terrific. Facing musketry and cannon shot and shell without a single gun with which to reply, the Confederates repeatedly charged an impenetrable front, under a sun, which rising higher and higher, at last became absolutely scorching."

No considerable development of line by the enemy that would be of advantage to him, could be made in front of the divisions of Ruger or Geary without exposure of a large part of his lines to an enfilading fire of musketry, and to a cross fire from the artillery on the high ground south of the road and from Powers' Hill; these last mentioned batteries fired over the line of the First Division, Twelfth Corps, causing a small but unavoidable loss.

The morning advanced slowly. The enemy, by repeated assaults struggled fiercely to make headway, but suffered severely without progressing perceptibly, when General Ruger received orders to try the forces in the woods behind the works on the north of the swale or meadow, and if practicable, to drive them out. Orders were sent Colonel Colgrove to advance skirmishers against the enemy at that point, and if not found too

strong, to advance two regiments and drive them out. "From a mistake of the staff officer, or misunderstanding on the part of Colonel Colgrove," writes General Ruger, "it was attempted to carry the position without first ascertaining the strength of the enemy."

It was seven o'clock. The battle which, begun before it was fully light in the woods and behind the breastworks and large ledges of rocks on the southern slopes and eastern face of Culp's Hill to the left of the position occupied by Ruger's division, had been extremely severe, was now thought to be receding, and loud cheering was heard along the lines. "It was evident," writes Colonel Colgrove, "that General Geary had dislodged the enemy and had retaken the breastworks of Candy and Kane, vacated the night before." At the same time on Colgrove's front the enemy was discovered by him to have advanced in line to the woods, and forming nearly at right angles with his front. At this juncture Lieutenant Snow of General Ruger's staff delivered the order to Colonel Colgrove, "The General directs that you advance your line immediately." "The position of the 1st brigade," writes Colgrove, "was such that it was impossible to advance more than two regiments in line." For between the enemy and Colgrove's command was an open meadow, now known as "the swale," about one hundred yards in width at this point. Breastworks and ledges of rocks entirely sheltered the enemy. It was impossible to send forward skirmishers, as the enemy's advantages were such that a line of skirmishers would be cut down before they would fairly gain the open ground that intervened. "The only possible chance I had to advance," writes General Colgrove, "was to carry the enemy's position by storming it." "I selected the 2d Massachusetts and the 27th Indiana, and ordered the 2d Massachusetts to charge the works in front of their position, and the 27th Indiana as soon as they should gain the open ground, to carry the position held in the ledges of rocks." "At the command, 'Forward, double-quick,' our breastworks were cleared, and both regiments, with deafen-

ing cheers sprang forward. They had scarcely gained the open ground when they were met with one of the most destructive fires I have ever witnessed. Up to this time the enemy remained entirely concealed. It had been impossible to tell anything about his strength in our immediate front, but it was now clearly ascertained that he had massed a heavy force at that point. It would seem that the two regiments were doomed to destruction."

In these words which I have quoted, General Colgrove bears witness to the discipline and to the invincible courage of our own Second Regiment Massachusetts Infantry, and we are now for the first time able to trace to its source, the error, and the order which sent this gallant regiment across the narrow swale to its fate. Not pausing to reason why, they rushed into the very teeth of an overwhelming force, concealed by dense woods, protected by breastworks, or shielded by great ledges. No less than three brigades of the enemy are reported to have been on the ground which these two small regiments were ordered to carry, and one was the "Old Stonewall Brigade." The 2d Massachusetts gained the woods; the 27th Indiana broke when half way across the meadow.

Permit me to refer to a paper written by companion Colonel Charles F. Morse of the Second Massachusetts and read at a reunion of the survivors of the regimental officers, May 10, 1878.

"A verbal order was given Colonel Mudge, directing him to charge across the meadow and attempt to drive the enemy out of their works in the woods. Chaplain Quint in his book says, Lieutenant-Colonel Mudge questioned the messenger, 'Are you sure that is the order?' 'Yes.' 'Well it is murder, but it is the order.' 'Up, men, over the works; forward, double-quick.'"

These words deserve a longer life than those so widely known, "Up guards, and at them." For, up and out from behind well built life-saving intrenchments the men of the 2d Massachusetts dashed across the swale where 'even a skirmish

line could not live,' into death-dealing woods. Driven out, fighting their way back through a line of the enemy thrown behind them to compel their surrender, forming anew under the protection of a low detached piece of stonewall about half way across the meadow, they cleared the ground of the enemy in their new front, then fell back to their new position. Upon calling the roll, not one man was reported as missing. The Second Massachusetts, writes Colonel Morse, went into action with twenty-two officers and two hundred and ninety-four enlisted men, and when the roll-call was ended, but one hundred and ninety had answered to their names, and the little knot of officers numbered but twelve. Five times the colors changed hands, and the next day when the regiment took its place in column to march away, as it passed General Slocum's headquarters, he and a large group of general and staff officers uncovered their heads."

From early dawn until ten o'clock, charge followed charge in swift succession — assault and counter assault served only to multiply the winrows of the dead and wounded in the Confederate ranks; the cross-fire of artillery and musketry barely held in check the savage onslaught of Johnson's men.

Never before in the history of the Army of the Potomac, and never again until this same Edward Johnson's division had been gathered in, artillery, battle flags, and all, — prisoners of war at Spottsylvania, — did men so nearly thrust the smoking muzzles of their rifles into each other's faces; nowhere before and not again, until the Brock road had been reached, and the tangled thickets of the Wilderness concealed lines of battle almost in contact, was volleying so heavy and so continuous from so small a front as Greene's on the crest of Culp's Hill during the hard fighting, urged with varying fortune to gain and to maintain possession of the Baltimore pike.

Directly in my rear, their left resting close to the foot of the knoll I occupied, I counted twelve lines of infantry crouching in the grass and behind the rocks and stone walls in the

narrow fields separating Greene's right from the pike ; so great the danger of the enemy's breaking through at this point.

Nothing that I have ever read describes the situation so well as the poet Stedman's versification of the words of the gallant Kearney at the Seven Pines, —

“ Up came the reserves to the *melée* infernal,  
Shouting, ‘ Where to go in, through opening or pine,’  
‘ Anywheres, forward, ’tis all the same, Colonel,  
You’ll find lovely fighting along the whole line.’ ”

Just at this time the enemy showed signs of yielding — then came the rush, the grand rush to recapture our breast-works ; then cheers ; for the intrenchments were once more in our possession, the enemy had been driven out and down the slopes. The right flank was safe.

General Geary, commanding the Second Division, Twelfth Corps, reports nine hundred buried in his front, and estimates the loss of the enemy at twelve hundred killed, and the wounded at the ratio of four to one killed.

“ The day was a most disastrous one to Ewell's Corps,” writes General Geary, “ and equally if not more so to the whole rebel army, in consideration of the importance which the turning of our flank would be to them, and which alone could compensate them for the repulse they had already on the previous evening received from these parts of our line in their well-conceived designs upon the key-points to the position of our army ; they were not only defeated, but terribly punished.”

No place on the field of Gettysburg presented such terrible effect of battle as the portion of Culp's Hill in front of Greene's line, and along the works vacated on the evening of the second, by McDougall's brigade of the First Division. From under our works, down the hill to the creek, the open places were covered with Confederate dead, every exposed place holding groups, and behind the rocks many wounded had been dragged only to die a lingering death.

About 11 A.M. a considerable number of the enemy in front

of Greene's intrenchments and close up to our lines, displayed a white flag. Major Leigh, Johnson's chief of staff, galloped into the throng, and endeavored to prevent the surrender, but fell shot to pieces almost, by a volley from our works. I remember well on the morning of the 4th, crossing from my position the short distance to the front of Greene's line, and there seeing Major Leigh pinned to the ground by his horse, shot at the same time with his rider and falling on him.

Of all those lying there, whose leader he seemed to be, who would watch no more for the coming of Longstreet's mighty hosts; who would listen no longer for Hill's bugles sounding the charge, or the volleying rifles of Stonewall Jackson's old corps hurrying to their support; of all the uncounted dead covering the ground; of the dying, tenderly cared for by hands which but the day before had given mortal wounds; of all the signs of battle, in trees stripped by bullets and torn by shot and shell; of all these, no memory is so vivid as that of this dead soldier, still astride his horse, borne, as it were, on the crest of the highest wave of the Rebellion up into the flame of our guns, almost seizing our flags swaying in the smoke of that fierce, uncertain struggle.

## MY CAPTURE, PRISON LIFE AND ESCAPE



## MY CAPTURE, PRISON LIFE AND ESCAPE

BY

BREVET-MAJOR ANDREW M. BENSON, U. S. V.

IN June, 1864, there came together about fourteen thousand of cavalry and six light batteries for the purpose of making a raid around Richmond, the object being to destroy all the railroads leading into Richmond and Petersburg from the south, including the Petersburg & Weldon, the South Side, and the Richmond & Danville. This force was placed in command of General Wilson.

On the night of the 25th, we passed around the flanks of both armies and struck the Petersburg & Weldon at a place called Reams Station. There we took and destroyed half a dozen passenger freight trains and captured a few Confederate soldiers. This I think was the only victory gained at any time during the raid.

Immediately after our men had secured what few soldiers there were, they destroyed the road for a long distance on both sides of the station. As soon as that was accomplished they turned their attention to the South Side, a road that reaches from Reams Station to the Richmond & Danville, a distance of forty-six miles, and joining that road at a place called Black and White. The road we entirely destroyed from that point on the Petersburg & Weldon to the Richmond & Danville.

After reaching the Richmond & Danville Road the larger portion of that road was torn up, destroying all the public property as far as the Roanoke — and I dare say some private property may have suffered a little.

My squadron was selected for the purpose of wrecking the bridge over the Roanoke. Numbers one, two and three dis-

mounted, while Numbers four took the horses into a secure place. There was a distance to traverse of about a mile and a half. As soon as we had ridden well out on to the plain we came within range of the enemy, who opened on us with shells. We kept on until within close range when they fired shrapnel, case shot and canister. I was so near that I could see the gunner. When he had fixed the lanyard and was about to discharge the piece, I gave the order for my men to lie down. At that time I happened to be in front of my little command. I turned around to the left to see that the left was down, and then to the right to see that the right was down, when I unfortunately went down myself with a canister shot in my side. That was the end of my career for a time.

We went no further in that direction, having quite a number wounded and some killed. Those that were killed were buried, and for the wounded we secured all the means of transportation we could, top-buggies, wagons, hacks, and every other conceivable thing on wheels that we could get, and in that way started back again to our army.

Our return march was by nearly the same course that we had been following in the advance. We had almost reached the Petersburg & Weldon railroad when we found in front of us Wade Hampton's and Fitzhugh Lee's brigades of cavalry, and Mahone's division of infantry. Our artillery was parked on the right side of the road while the ambulances were on the left.

I was aware of a little skirmishing in front, but knew nothing about the nature of it until I saw our men fire the caissons and cut the wheels of the guns, all of which were destroyed. And I believe that in that raid, of all the artillery and wagons with which we had started, not a single wheel was ever brought back into our lines.

When the caissons were fired and the shells began to explode, I found that my position was not any too comfortable, and so I left the hack I was riding in at what I considered a judicious time, and went into the woods. I had been among the

trees but a few seconds when two or three straggling Confederates who happened to be in there saw me, and of course I surrendered to them.

I was taken out into the road, and after going a little distance came upon the right of General Mahone's division, where I was turned over to the provost guard. I was told, in the first place to sit down on the fence so that they might take off my boots. I had on a pair of Burnside cavalry boots, almost new, which attracted the attention of the Confederates, and they were very desirous to obtain them. So they took my boots off — I was not in condition to take them off very well myself — and half a dozen of them tried them on. At last they passed them back to me with a look of disgust and this remark: "Oh God! what feet!" So I put on my boots and wore them out myself.

After a time General Wilson with his entire command of cavalry retreated. They were followed by Wade Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee, and about five hundred prisoners were captured. In a short time these prisoners were brought to the rear, placed under guard, and marched to Petersburg. We were there put into a tobacco warehouse and kept three days, with nothing to eat but cold water and Indian meal.

On the 4th of July we were removed to Richmond, and as we were marching through the town we were asked "If this was the advance guard of General Grant's army?" We told them we thought it was, but we did not think then that the main body would be ten months behind.

We were taken to Libby Prison, and there shown our quarters. Mine was beside a post, on the floor, without blankets. Our rations were issued to us. They consisted of about twenty-two ounces of bread and thirty ounces of meat for one week. We had something else that they gave us one week; I do not know what the name of it was.

We remained there until the 5th or 6th of August, when we were taken away. We knew that we were going somewhere, but of course did not know where. It proved, however, that we

were bound for Macon, Ga. We were put into box cars, sixty-five in a car. There were no modern conveniences. No man was allowed to go out. We were confined in the car for two and one-half days, until we reached Macon.

The majority arrived there all right. Some few jumped off the car and escaped, I hope ; but the greater proportion reached Macon and were put into the stockade. The prisoners there aggregated, after our arrival, sixteen hundred, all officers. After we had been there some time we had very nice quarters in barracks. We also had blankets. Our food was as good as I expected it would be, and a great improvement over that at Petersburg and Richmond, but we did not feel inclined to accept and be contented with our position. We thought we wouldn't stay there any longer than we could help, and a few of us got together and arranged to dig a tunnel. I was not in condition to dig very much. Still I was in the secret and assisted as well as I could. Those who were more interested than I and had more to do with it, labored night after night diligently, and one morning as we fell in for roll-call, after all the prisoners were in place, the guard marched in to the rear of us and took their places, and some of them went to this very place where the tunnel had commenced, took away the covering, and the whole thing was broken in. There was one of our number, it was said — I hope it was not true but am inclined to think that it was — who had told the authorities that such a thing was being done, and an officer of our own army was taken out of the quarters that day and never came back again.

We remained there some time and then five or six hundred were removed to Charleston ; the rest were taken to Savannah. I happened to be among those who went to Savannah. We were put into what was known as "The Marine Hospital," a delightful place. We had tents, rations were issued to us regularly, and we enjoyed ourselves as well as we could in a prison.

After we had been there a short time we conceived the idea of digging another tunnel. Twenty-five of us formed a plan by

which we might liberate the whole party if we could carry it through. The hospital vault was on one side of the yard and we thought that if we could get into that vault we should be able to conceal there the earth that we took from the tunnel.

Now, in regard to our manner of tunnelling. There are some in this Commandery who have tunnelled. To those who have not done any such work I will say that we made an endless rope of blankets and at intervals of every ten feet there would be a little bag holding ten or twelve quarts. The man whose duty it was to take the earth from the pit would take that rope on his arm and crawl into the tunnel and take the first bag he came to and fill it, and two pulls meant to start it out and one to stop. When one bag was filled he had that passed along until the next empty bag came up, then filled that and so on. As soon as the first bag reached the mouth of the tunnel there was another party who took that in a bucket and carried it over the yard, sprinkling it as carefully as he could, and in the morning it was the duty of the police to clean the grounds. This earth was piled in little heaps and mule teams took it out in the morning. In this way the enemy promoted our scheme. All that we had to dig with was a strap hinge and a case knife. We used the case knife for cutting through roots and the hinge for digging, and with only these implements we excavated a tunnel about one hundred and twenty feet long.

It was bright moonlight when we completed the tunnel, and we did not think it advisable to go out then. We therefore waited for a dark night. But cows were grazing over in the lot next to the yard and unfortunately for us they broke into the tunnel. The Confederates investigated and found that it was a tunnel leading from the camp. They placed a guard there and waited for us.

When the first dark night came Captain McElroy, Captain Grant of the 19th Wisconsin and myself were selected to go out and reconnoitre and find out what was the best thing to do. We had our clothes done up in a little bundle and pushed them in

front of us — and here I will say that those who worked in the tunnel were naked all the time. We pushed our little bundles ahead of us until we came to the end of the tunnel, McElroy ahead, and he took his hinge in order to enlarge the opening a little when somebody from the outside called the corporal of the guard and immediately thrust a bayonet down into the ground at that place, which came near going through the captain's neck. He called out "Get back, we are discovered." Of course we had to back up until we got to the vault, and there we shifted ends and went out the other way.

When we came out, Colonel Wayne, the commander, was there with his guard, and the pioneers with their spades and picks. After taking our names and telling us what fine specimens of officers we were, he asked if there were many in the Union army as good and as fine looking as we were. Of course we did not explain how we came to be in such condition. We were ordered to our quarters.

A few nights afterwards, in walking through the yard, we discovered between the camps and the hospital a disused well. We determined to dig into this well, and so started another tunnel. We had been working but a little time when one night I was standing on the edge of the shaft and said to the man who was in the tunnel, or just about going in, "You must make this tunnel larger; the other wasn't quite large enough." Of course I did not imagine that there was any one about who was not in sympathy with us, when a man standing near by said, "Don't you-uns want to buy a shirt?" I looked up, and there was a Confederate directly over my shoulder. I sprang up as quickly as I could, and attempted to catch him, but he reached the gate first, and in a little time — it was a very dark, rainy night — Colonel Wayne came again with his guard, proceeded immediately to our camp and said, "Take down these tents. I will raze every one of them to the ground, but I will stop these accursed Yankees from digging." We had taken refuge in the first tents we came to. I sprang into a tent near

this and the others were further away. There were two officers in this tent who were very ill, and I knew that to expose them to the weather would be very dangerous to them ; so I came out of my hiding-place and went to the colonel, and said, "Colonel, it seems very hard that those officers who are ill should be exposed to this weather." He turned to me and said, "What is it that you know about this?" I said "I know all about it, as I organized the party that dug it, and I think I can give you as much information as any one." .At that time Captain Grant came out and said, "I am Captain Benson's second in command, and if there is any punishment to be inflicted I propose to take my share of it." Colonel Wayne said, "What are your names?" I said, "My name is Benson." Grant said his name was Grant. Colonel Wayne said, "Oh, yes, I think I have your names." I said, "I think you have — you took them, at least." He then told us to go to quarters.

He then went away. In the morning I went to call on a friend in another part of the yard, and one of the mess came down and said, "The provost guard is at your tent and want you to come up there." I went to the tent and found a corporal and two soldiers with bayonets fixed. The corporal told me that he wanted me to go with them. So I took my boots down from the ridgepole of the tent, put them on, went out, proceeded with the guard, and found that Captain Grant had to go with another squad. I didn't know what they were going to do with us, but we were immediately informed by the colonel, who was outside of the gate. It was Sunday. As we came out, he kindly informed me that he was very sorry that my propensities for digging were so great, as he thought my quarters very much more comfortable than the place he was going to send me to. I thanked him, and told him he couldn't put me in any place where I should ask any odds of him. We were taken to the jail, turned over to the jailer, put down into a dungeon there, and in that place we stayed sixteen days. We did not have a drop of water or a piece of bread during our stay there ; a soup was issued to

us regularly and it was quite nice, too. It was sufficient for us to live on.

On the sixteenth day, in the morning, there was a change in our affairs. The quartermaster of the post had been in the habit of going through the corridor for the purpose of being with the jailer, to whip a negro who had stolen a tent, trying to get him to tell where it was secreted. For several mornings they had gone around there and I could hear the screams of that poor fellow. Of course I didn't know what it was all about until I met this officer. The name of the officer was Hatch, and as he was going by the cell on the morning of the 16th, I happened to think that I was a Mason, a Knight Templar, but I had been one for so short a time that I really had not thought of it. This time I did, and I gave him a sign which he readily understood. He stopped and wanted to know how long I had been in there. I told him sixteen days, and informed him why I was there, what I had been doing, etc., and he told me that Colonel Wayne — who, by the way, was the colonel of the first regular Confederate regiment, and rather a fine officer — was the Grand Commander of the Knights Templars for the State of Georgia, "and," he added, "should you make an application to be released, I have no doubt he will send you back to the stockade. If you wish to make such an application, I will go and get some paper, pen, and ink, and I will be very glad indeed to take the application to him myself." I thanked him. He went out, brought paper, pen, and a lighted candle, and I wrote the application. I simply told him that should I remain in his command longer I would not use any more means to escape.

He took the application out. This was in the morning about 10 o'clock. In the afternoon Colonel Wayne came down. I heard the door unlocked, and hoped that it was on my account, for I wanted to get away from there. I had countless vermin on me, and could only get sleep by taking off all my clothes, piling them in a corner of the cell, and using my boots for a pillow. They were the only things I had to rest upon except

the cold flag-stones in the cell. Therefore anything would be welcome. He came down with the jailer and said to me, "You have sent for me?" I said, "Yes, Colonel, I have. I simply sent an application to you." "Well," he said, "I received it and have come here to take you out, but I find that you haven't embodied in that application all that I wish you would." I said, "Very well, Colonel, what else do you want?" "I want you to tell me now that if you should see any of your comrades attempting to escape during your stay here in Savannah you will take means to let me know." "Well," I said, "Colonel, I am surprised that you should ask such a thing of an old soldier. I am surprised." He laughingly said that he didn't expect that I would consent. "But," he said, "I am going to take you out anyway."

He then ordered the jailer to unlock the door of the cell, and I stepped out into the corridor. As I did so I said, "Where is Captain Grant?" The colonel replied, "Over there, I suppose, and he can stay there until he rots for all me." "Well," I said, "Colonel, you know very well when I came to you that night in the storm and told you those officers were ill, the captain came out very quietly and told you he was my second in command, and if there was any punishment to be inflicted he proposed to take his share of it. Now, I shall not go out unless you let Captain Grant out as well. You can take him out, or put me back." He said, "Very well, I will let him go back on one condition, and that is that you shall be responsible for Captain Grant." I said, "If the captain attempts to escape and I know it, I will catch him if I can, and hold him until you come."

They went to the captain's cell and took him out. He was a man whom I then thought was a very old man — he was forty — and they had to take a stretcher and carry him back to the stockade. Of course we had quite an ovation when we got back to the stockade that afternoon.

In a little time after that we were taken over to Charleston and joined our comrades, who had preceded us. On the way

we conceived the idea of capturing the train. Some of the men had been over the road and knew it thoroughly, and we thought with a code of signals that we should be able with some concert of action to capture the train, destroy the bridge over which we were to pass, and make our way to the coast. The plan was given into the hands of an officer who agreed to get into the forward car, if he could, and upon a signal which he was to give before approaching the bridge we were to act. In our car, as in every car, there were four soldiers with their muskets. They generally sat near the door with their muskets crossed over the entrance. We thought we could capture those guards inside very readily, and with four muskets in each party we could spring out, after the train had been brought to a standstill, and overpower the guards who were on the top of the cars. It was a risky undertaking, but still we thought we might possibly accomplish it. We expected that those eight men on the top of the cars would shoot eight of us — which eight we did not know exactly, but some one must die if we attempted it. That we fully realized. But the officer, unfortunately — or fortunately for a good many, perhaps — never gave the signal, and we went over the bridge all right and into Charleston.

As we entered, Grant and I were sitting together, looking out of the door. We did not see any favorable places to escape, and decided that we would try and behave ourselves after we got into Charleston, and take things as we found them. We arrived in the afternoon of a very hot day, and the men of our party were taken into the jail yard, one of the most filthy places I ever saw. The roll was being called, and my name came near the head of the list. As I was walking along, stepping through a little narrow gate into the yard, the officer there said, "You stand a moment." I stood alongside of him wondering what was going to come next; then when Grant came along he was also taken out of the line and stood beside me.

After the entire roll was called we were told to come into the officer's quarters. The officer, who was a Lieutenant

Vedetto of this same regiment, took a letter from the table, and said, "What were you doing in Savannah?" I told him, "Nothing in particular." "You have been doing something. I have a letter in my possession which came from Colonel Wayne, and I would advise you to tell me just what you were doing." I told him we had attempted to escape twice, had been captured, had been taken once and put in a dungeon and kept there sixteen days with very little to eat, with rats in abundance, and cockroaches, weighing anywhere from one to six pounds apiece, falling on us. I said that I didn't think we could be punished any more. He said, "No, I don't think that there is any further punishment that can be inflicted, but here is a letter, and I will read it :

"MY DEAR VEDETTO, — You will find in the squad I send you to-day two officers, Captains Benson and Grant, who have caused me a great deal of trouble here in Savannah; and I would suggest that you offer them a parole. If they will sign it I will vouch for them."

We signed the parole, and were put down into a house on the peninsula between the Cooper and the Ashley Rivers. This house was owned by Dr. Todd, a brother of Mrs. Lincoln. There we had the freedom of the city, — that part of it south of King Street. There were only two houses in that part then; the rest had been burned up.

Now the reason why we were put down there under fire was simply to protect the city, to stop our people on Morris Island from shelling the town. In retaliation our government built a stockade on Morris Island, and took sixteen hundred prisoners, I believe from Dayton, O., putting them into the stockade. A compromise was made a little while after, and we were taken from Charleston and sent up to Columbia.

About the second or third day of October we were taken on board the cars for Columbia; and before going to the cars Grant said, "As soon as it gets dark I am going to jump off the car, and I want you to go with me. I will jump off just as soon as we get on to high land, if I can find any." We found

out that we were going to Columbia, and I told him it would be better to stay on the train until we got nearly there. I much preferred riding to walking, and thought it best to stay where we were and get all the riding we could; but in the morning Grant was gone. The balance of us were taken across the Congaree River, and put into a field with a guard, and a dead line established, the sentinels being composed of old men and boys from the college there. The old men could carry a musket on one shoulder, and a cane in the other hand. Of course the boys were strapping fellows; but it seemed humiliating to be confined there — sixteen hundred of us — with those boys and very old men, — men over sixty-five years of age, and boys less than fifteen.

After I had been in the camp a little while I saw by the papers that some of the men from my own regiment had been captured, and were in the jail down town. I went to Major Mills, the commander, and got permission to go down to see these men. Several of us went together. He sent a guard of one with us, — one of his officers. We told him we would come back again if he would let us go. So we went down to Columbia. It was quite a warm afternoon. The only thing I had to wear that was decent was an officer's overcoat which I borrowed, and I was nearly roasted. Perhaps that may be why I thought it was so warm.

We went down, and I found my men. We stayed around town quite a while, and then started across the river again. We came to a place near where the Confederacy had their plant for manufacturing their valuable money. The Confederate officer in charge of us happened to recollect that he had some friends living in that neighborhood, so he wanted us, as there was a big shower coming up, to go in there for protection. We went in, and it was dark before we got away. When we did get away, as this officer had been imbibing quite freely, Captain Roche of the 12th New York Heavy Artillery, Lieutenant Swan and myself, were obliged to lead our guard home. We did it safely,

and turned him over to the commander. The major said, "Gentlemen, had I been in your places, I wouldn't have come back." I said, "Yes, but we told you we would come back. We are, however — or I for one am going to leave you very soon. I have been out just long enough to think that I can do so." "Well," he said, "let me know a little while before you go and I will try and prevent it."

We tried to get up a party there to capture the camp. This Congaree River was quite a broad river, with no other crossing save one until the Saluda is reached. The Saluda and French Broad form the Congaree. The river was also quite rapid. We thought that if we could capture the camp, there being five twelve-pounders there and a good supply of ammunition, we would have a safe commanding position. We planned to capture the guard when we fell in at the morning roll-call, because when the roll was being called the Confederates were cooking their breakfast, and we were as near as they to the stacked arms. We thought we could capture the guard, and take possession of the camp, and so we tried to get up a company to do it. Out of the sixteen hundred men we got one hundred and eighty who said they would try. We went to Colonel Thorpe of the 8th Illinois Cavalry and told him what our plan was. He said it was a rash piece of business, and that we ought not to think of attempting it; that if we did he should inform the authorities and have it stopped right where it was. His advice may have been good, but we thought we knew better. However, the plan fell through.

Our next thought was to run the guard. Colonel Walpole, — a captain at that time, — Captain Geer, Lieutenant Correll and myself got together one day and decided to run the guard and make our way North. The night that we selected was very dark. It was the first night of November. We were tired of staying out in the field with no covering and very little to eat. We concluded that we could do better by ourselves, and decided to make the attempt anyway. The night that we intended to

carry it into execution we crawled up as near as we dared to the dead line and waited for the relief to come. The instructions were that if any one attempted to run the guard or if there was anything that caused a sentry to fire, the entire front should concentrate its fire upon that one point. We waited until the sentinel had been released and the guard was in motion. Then all four of us got on to our feet and ran over the line. Of course we made some noise and confusion. The sentry nearest to us fired, but it was so dark that he happened not to hit any of us. Immediately the whole relief faced about and fired. But we got away into the woods and kept on running as long as we could. We ran until it was beginning to show a little daylight, when we went into the woods again, found a convenient place and lay down. There we remained all day, not daring to show our heads, because we were near many people. We could hear them talking, could see them all around us, but fortunately they did not see us. We remained there until night and then started out. For seven days we scouted along through the night and in the daytime would sleep under a log or in any convenient hiding-place we could find. In rainy and cold weather it was a little uncomfortable.

On the seventh day, Colonel Walpole, not being accustomed to such usage, became exhausted and wanted us to let him stop and give himself up to the authorities, while we went on. We declined to do that. We had been living on nothing but raw corn which we had taken from the fields and carried in our pockets. This we wet when we got such water as we would find at the side of the road. On the seventh night when we were discussing the situation, we saw a little light in front and determined for the first time to go to a house and see if we couldn't get something to eat. We had usually marched in single file on moonlight nights, forty or fifty yards apart, and when it was dark not a third of that distance. During all the nights while we were on the road there was not a word spoken that could be heard halfway across this room. My business

was to go ahead, Geer's was to select a suitable place for camp, Walpole helped bring water for the cook, Correll did the cooking.

I went to this door and knocked and some one said "Who is there?" I told him "A friend." They wanted to know who I was. I said "Open the door and let me in, and I will tell you just who I am." After consultation they opened the door and I went in. The one who opened the door was an old colored man and he immediately, upon slipping the bolt, jumped back into bed, and I saw that there was also an old colored woman. The only room in the house was this one, which was occupied by this elderly couple. I walked up to the side of the bed and told them that I wanted something to eat, that I was nearly famished. The old man said "We haven't got anything, Massa, we are very poor." "Haven't you something? Can't you give me a piece of pone or something?—I don't care what it is." "We haven't anything." "Haven't you a piece of bread, a piece of meat, or anything?" "No, we can't give you anything, we haven't anything." "Then perhaps I will ask you another favor—do you suppose you could keep a secret if I told you something?" He said he didn't know, perhaps he could. I said "I am a Union officer, escaped from prison at Columbia, South Carolina, and we are trying to work our way up into our lines at Knoxville." Well, both of them jumped out of bed then and the woman went to the corner where there was a little box, opened it and took out a wooden tray, got some meal and water and the necessary seasoning. The old man raked open the coals upon the hearth and took out a turkey wing. In a little while a pone was nicely moulded and placed there, and soon I had such a banquet as I never enjoyed before in my life.

The old man seemed to be very earnest about whatever he attempted to do. He said "Now, you mustn't go any farther to-night. I will take you up into a laurel patch here, where there is a disused still, and to-morrow bring you up something to eat,

or mother will, and then I will either go with you myself or furnish a younger man to pilot you for a distance." He then dressed himself, took us about two miles into the woods and showed us this old still, and told us we could lie there in perfect safety. There was straw, and three of us lay down while the other one took his place at the entrance to the still and remained on guard during the daytime.

In the afternoon, at about two o'clock I noticed coming from the other side through a little opening, this colored woman, our hostess of the night before. She came in, taking a circuitous way. At every turn she made I saw that she was approaching this point, and as she came to the path I stepped farther back into the woods and let her come in. When I stepped in front of her she said "My, I am so glad to see you. I have brought your dinner." She had brought us a very nice dinner, and seemed to enjoy seeing us eat as much as we enjoyed eating. She told us that her husband would come that night, that by a signal agreed upon he would let us know that it was he and that we were to answer it in the same manner. She also said that they had invited some of their friends down in the country to meet us.

The old gentleman came along about nine o'clock and we started off to join in this reception over in the lot. We found there fifteen or twenty colored people. They had assembled from around the neighborhood, and we were introduced to them, they being told that we were officers of the United States Army.

We had a very nice time there. They brought some little things for us. Some had socks and others mittens. I was sitting on a stone heap with a buxom colored woman and she wanted to give me something, she didn't know what, but she said the only thing she thought of that would do me any good was a fine-tooth comb. I told her she couldn't have thought of anything that was more useful, and I kept it and used it.

After the reception was over the old fellow selected a young

man, who went with us ten miles that night, and put us in the hands of another colored man. And so it was for quite a long way. Sometimes we were sent to find these people and missed them, and then had to work our way along as best we could.

There was a man whom we had been told about, Mr. John Logan, whose brother was in the Confederate Congress—a man noted for his goodness all over that region. We were assured that if we could find him we should get assistance. The negroes all knew him, and as this negro who went with us to his house could not be seen with us, he left us to do as best we could. I went to the door and knocked. He had a room in a little post-office, a small building near the road. He owned a beautiful mansion near by, but his wife having died a little while before, he would not stay in it a moment afterwards, but had a room finished off in this little building. When I knocked a young colored man came to the door. I said, "Is Mr. Logan in?" He said he was, in bed. I walked in. There was a partition between the outside front room and this sleeping room, which did not go more than two-thirds of the way up to the ceiling. I went into the sleeping room, walked up to the bedside, and said "Is this Mr. Logan?" He said it was. I said "Mr. Logan I am an escaped prisoner, a Union officer from Columbia, and am trying to work my way north to the mountains, to Knoxville. I have been told that you are a friend of the Yankees, and that if I could find you you would give me some assistance." He sort of turned over in his bed a little and said, "I am not a friend of the Yankees; I sha'n't give you any food or directions, but I will take you and turn you over to the authorities to-morrow morning." At the same time he threw the clothes off and sprang on the floor. When he got out of bed I found that he was a small man, and had a crooked leg and walked on his toes. Now, I never saw a man in my life I was afraid of who walked on his toes. There was a rifle in the corner and I stepped over and seized it. I said, "I came in here, Mr. Logan, expecting to find some one who would assist me.

I am very much disappointed, I certainly don't want to injure you. I don't want any trouble with you. I simply tell you to go back to bed, because if you don't I shall be inclined to send your soul to God quicker than you ever received it." He went back to bed that instant, and didn't have the politeness to say "Good-night."

I stood there for a moment, deliberating what was best to do, and decided that I would go out into the darkness, notify my people that I had not met with success, and that we would then go on and try to find somebody else. As soon as I got out of the room Logan called to the colored man and said, "You go out and keep your eye on the Yankee, and in the morning I will get a force out and catch him." I started out and went back again on the same road. Down this road on one side were some very large chestnut trees. This little colored fellow was following me. I got him down as far as I thought was necessary, and then I stepped behind a tree and let him come up. He came crawling along, and although it was dark I located him all right and sprang on him. I seized him and said "Now, if you make one particle of noise I will kill you. I have killed five niggers to-day, and if you don't look out you will be the sixth. Now I want you to be quiet." As soon as he could he said, "Well, Massa, I know you are a Yankee, and of course we want to help you." He was a very bright young fellow, and he said, "Now I will go back and tell Massa I can't find you; then he will tell me to go out and stay until I can find you, then I will go and get you something to eat, and then I will go with you a little way, and tell you how to get along." I followed him up to the house again and he told his master that he could not find me, and the master told him to go out and stay until he did find me. Then he went out, went to a little cabin and got something for us to eat. Then that colored man went with us eight miles that night, as far as he could go and get back in season for his day's task.

And so we went on. We had a great deal of adventure, in

one way and another, with the home guard. The home guard consisted of old men of sixty to sixty-five years, which was the limit, and the younger boys, formed into what was known as a private guard. Their duties were to patrol all roads for the purpose of catching runaway negroes or escaped prisoners like ourselves. We were continually coming across these people, but always managed in some way to avoid them.

One night as we were going along we made up our minds that we wanted some green goose, and as we were armed with hickory sticks Correll thought we could kill a goose without making any noise, which was something that I never knew to be done. He walked up to a flock of geese and struck into them. Unfortunately there was a man standing in front of his house, who said, "What are you doing? What is the matter there? Get out!" Of course we knew that something would be the matter unless we got out of the way, so we jumped over the fence, flanked the house, and came around on the other side. We started off and had gone perhaps a mile or two when I heard a hound behind us, and knew what it all meant. We knew we were nearing the Broad River, but did not know exactly where it was, although we could tell by the atmosphere that it was not far off. We climbed over a fence, ran across a field, and came upon the river. A fence extended to the water's edge, and as we reached the stream we began taking the rails and putting them into the water, holding them to the shore at one end by a stone. On them we piled crosswise all the rails we could get. When the dogs came very close to us we sprang on to the rails, pushed out into the stream and began paddling for the other shore. The dogs came to the place where we had embarked. We could hear them, and could even hear the men with them talking, but they did not see us. We reached the other side safely, but much chilled, and frolicked around until our blood was in good circulation.

One Sunday night we were going along very quietly, with the woods on one side and fields on the other, when we heard

people in front of us. They were singing some old familiar gospel hymn. It struck me very forcibly. That day we had had nothing to eat, and were nearly famished. I said to my companions, "If you will stop right here near enough to support me—I don't know just what I am going to contend with—I will go along and see what is going on. Probably there is a negro there, and if there is I will take him out." So I went along a little way and hid myself behind a small hummock. The very first person that appeared was a small negro. I rose up, caught him in my arms, and threw him flat on the ground. The whole congregation, consisting of fifteen or twenty persons, passed within fifteen feet of our position, but it was very dark and they could not see us, and that negro never uttered a sound. After they were out of hearing I said to him, "Why didn't you holler?" He said, "Oh, golly, Massa, I was so scared I couldn't holler." I then told him who we were. He took us to the top of the hill to a white woman there whose husband was in the Union Army. She gave us everything she had in the house to eat. When we went away we wished to give her some souvenir. Geer gave her a silver pencil, and Walpole and Correll each cut a button off his coat. All that I had was a toothbrush which I paid fifteen or sixteen dollars for in Charleston, and I gave her that.

We came to the French Broad River, through that historical old place, the Cow-pens. One day we had an adventure with another man whom we met, named Goforth. We had been all day on a hill looking at him and his young men who were hauling corn fodder from the fields and piling it up in the barn. We were between two roads, and did not dare to get up from the logs where we were for fear of being seen. When it came night, just about dusk, we came down the hill, leaving Walpole and Correll on the hill. We went to the house, climbed over a little fence, and went alongside of this man and said, "Good-evening." He seemed to be very courteous, and Geer said—"Can you tell me which road we would take to go to Morgan-

ton?" "This one over here," he replied. "How far is it to Morganton?" "Eight miles." "Are there any hotels between here and Morganton?" "One they call a hotel three or four miles down the road. It is not very good, but they put people up." Then he said, "Who might you be?" Geer said, "We might be a great many people, but there are only two of us. We are special officers of the government." He wanted our papers, as it was the custom there with any person out in a strange part of the country to have a pass. Geer said, "We have papers, but we are not under any obligation to show them, as we are special officers, as I have told you, of the government. I certainly decline, and I presume my friend will decline to let you see them." I declined, telling him he couldn't see mine anyway. We kept him there until it was so dark that he couldn't see which way we were going. When we thought it was dark enough we bid him good-night and started along the road to Morganton. We wanted to go to Marion, in an entirely opposite direction. We went over the hill. As soon as he was fairly out of sight we jumped into the woods and lay down. In a short time those men saddled their mules, mounted, aroused their neighbors, and very soon six men went down the road as fast as they could go in pursuit of us. After they had gone we left our hiding-place, went around on the hill, found our companions, and hastened out of the district as fast as we could.

We came a little further up the country to a place called Spruce Pine. We learned that there was a man there named Isaac English who was recruiting for Kirk's Cavalry, and we were advised to go there, as he would assist us. We found Isaac English and learned that it was true, that he was a Union man — a loyal, true, staunch Union man. He told us that in the mountains above, where it was very high up, there was a force of about a thousand Confederate deserters, and about half that number of refugees who had been obliged to leave their homes and seek safety in the mountains. They were cared for by the people in the valleys below. They had there a loyal

league, called the "Red and White String," and these people wanted us to go up and be initiated into the order. We told them we would go. We went up and found, as Mr. English had said, a thousand Confederate deserters, and half as many refugees, with their camp-fires burning, arms stacked, and having a good time. We were introduced to the leader, the master of ceremonies, and after the social part of it was over we were told to kneel in a circle. They brought out a Bible and a wooden square, told us to place our right hands upon the square, and, with our left hand extended up to heaven, repeat after the leader a solemn oath which we did. We were given the countersign and the signal of distress, and then decorated with the emblem of the order, which was a red and white twisted string to be tied in the button-hole or elsewhere. He also told us that in Carter County we would find a great many loyal friends. Now Carter County in East Tennessee was a county distinctly loyal. It is surrounded by Yancy, Mitchell, Elizabeth, Jackson, and Johnson Counties, and nearly every person living in Carter County at the time we were there, was as loyal as ourselves. Those who had been disloyal in Carter County were driven from their homes and sought refuge in other neighboring counties, and all persons who had loyal sentiments were driven from their homes in other counties into Carter County. The result was that Carter County alone was all loyal, while all around them were disloyal.

A great many of these loyalists never stayed in their houses at night. They were on the alert, bushwhacking and raiding, and I learned in the little time I was there what it cost to be loyal. After we had been in this county a day or two we learned that Breckinridge had reinforced Vaughn, and driven General Gillam out of Bull's Gap, and all the passes by which we could get out had been stopped; consequently we were obliged to remain there until such time as circumstances would permit of our getting away.

At that time they were forming a party to go to Johnson

County on a raid, and we, not liking to remain behind, decided that we would join them, and go along for a little frolic. There were ninety-three men, indifferently armed, with but little ammunition. A few had rifles, one a flint-lock, another a musket; one or two had carbines, some had revolvers; some had ten rounds of cartridges, while others had but three. We started on the raid and went across the mountain to what is known as the Elk River, and tried to make our way up to Johnsonville, which is the shire town of Johnson County. Our scouts came in and reported such a force there that it would not be advisable to make an attack, as we had not ammunition enough or strength enough to cope with them. Then we decided to go over to Roan Mountain and finish up our little affair in that direction. We went over the mountain and came down into the valley, and the first man we saw was walking across the road. I, being a cavalry officer, was in advance with five men. I rode over to this man and told him I wanted him to turn over to us all he had in the way of oxen, horses and other things that we stood in need of. He wanted to know who we were, and I told him we were officers of the Union army. Well, that didn't seem to astonish him very much; however, we took everything he had in our line.

I there learned what a raid really meant. I had been on raids before but I never saw anything like this; cutlery, bedding, household utensils, — everything movable was taken out and tied in a bag, and in that way, taking oxen, sheep, cows, mules, and everything else, we had quite a miscellaneous stock.

We moved on, and for a long time did not see a man, but we captured everything that we could find, coming at last to a place called Taylor's Gut. It was a place through the mountains where the walls rise abruptly three or four hundred feet. I was riding along at the head of the column when an old lady came out and said, "Who is in command of this army?" I said, "Lieutenant Blackwell," who was in the rear. "Well," she

said, "you are going to be murdered, every one of you." "Why do you think so?" "Because there is a powerful heap of men up at yonder knob." "How many do you think there are?" "Oh, a right smart heap—a dozen of them." Well, I told her that if there weren't more than a dozen we shouldn't all get murdered. When the lieutenant came up the old lady repeated to him substantially what she had said to me. He called for volunteers to go into the bushes and shake them up, and in a minute they all wanted to go. There were not men enough left to drive the flock along. The volunteers went into the woods and located these men very quickly. Then after a little fusillade we drove through the Gut.

When we came out we reached a place called Taylor's Opening. We were riding along, as we thought, comparatively safe. I heard a screeching behind which really seemed as though there were ten thousand men in our rear. In the house of a Mr. Jake Wagner was a young lady who had just returned from boarding-school. She was screaming to prevent the men from going into the house, and at last persuaded them to go away. They left, and then I stole a beautiful Arabian horse. I liked the horse so well that I thought I would ride him off. I left word that I would send him back as soon as I had no further use for him.

In the meantime the small force we had left behind was coming after us. I turned around and saw a man coming over the hill riding on a white horse, his hair flying and his coat open to the shoulders, and six or eight more coming after him. I saw our men running, some one way and some another, and concluded that there was going to be a stampede, but I saw in a moment that they were simply taking to cover. One got behind an apple tree not over six inches in diameter, another behind a little stone pile, another took the corner of a fence. Lieutenant Blackwell directed them not to fire until he gave the order. As soon as the enemy were near enough he ordered our men to fire, and they did so, shooting four of them dead. The

man who was riding this white horse, when he fell from the horse, did not disengage his right foot from the stirrup and was dragged along on the ground for some distance. We then charged them, capturing the other four and took them along. That day we crossed the Elk River again and bivouacked for the night. The prisoners were put under guard, and I supposed something would be done with them, I didn't know what. But we had our camp fires built and passed the night, which was very cold, as comfortably as we could. In the morning, as I was not sleeping very soundly, I thought I would go down and see about those prisoners. I walked down to where they had been, but they were not there. I went to Lieutenant Blackwell and said "Lieutenant, those prisoners have gone." He said "Oh yes." "Did you know it?" "Oh yes, I supposed they would go." "Where have they gone to? What has become of them?" "Oh, don't inquire. They won't trouble you any more."

After we had eaten our breakfast we started up the mountain. There we found a courier who came out from Carter County, who said that the Mitchell County people were there raiding; sure enough, while we were away nearly two hundred men raided Carter County. When we returned there it looked desolate enough. What we took back with us from Johnson County was distributed to those people who had lost by the Mitchell County people.

About this time the blockade was raised and we decided that we would move on. We started down the valley and came to a place in Bull River Cove. We were then without food for some little time, as we were getting out of the friendly district and among our enemies again. One day looking into the wood I saw a little red house, and while watching it a young lady came to the back door and shook the crumbs from a tablecloth. That made us feel so ravenously hungry that we decided, contrary to our custom, to go to the house and see if we could get something to eat. I went around to the back door and the young

lady came to the door and invited me in. When I got into the house I didn't know just what to say. I looked at her and she at me, and I said to her "Have you seen any of our people go by this morning?" She said "What people?" I said "Rebels, of course." She said "You are no rebel. If you had been you would not have said 'rebels' but 'Confederates.'" I saw that she had me. So I said "I am not a rebel, nor a Confederate, but a Yankee. I came from Maine away up North. I came from Portland." "Why," she said, "I have been in Portland, Maine, myself. We have been to Canada and came through Portland, stopping at the United States Hotel," and she told me that her name was Lizzie M——, that her father's name was William M——, and she said "You mustn't go further this way. Morgan's raiders have just gone along this morning. They are a desperate set of men and should they see you they will certainly kill you." Well, having gone so far I did not wish to be killed just then, so I followed her advice. She called a colored boy who took us to another road, going in another direction, but still having as the objective point Knoxville.

We had a great many minor adventures of one kind and another, until finally we reached the Holston River. As we approached Knoxville we began to behave half decently. Previously, when we came to ferries with ropes, we had cut them after going across, or if there were boats, we had set them adrift, not asking permission of the ferryman to use the ferry. But this time we thought, as we were near Knoxville, that we would be friendly and awaken the man and get him to set us across. I went to the house and knocked, and some one asked the question from within, "Who are you, and what do you want?" I said that we wanted to be set across the river, that we were officers of the Confederate Army, travelling on special duty, and that we wanted to get across the river. He said, "I shall not set you across until you tell me who you are." So I said "Come down and I will tell you. So he came down with nothing but his shirt and trousers on, and as soon as he

opened the door I took him. All I wanted was the key, and fortunately I had both the man and key in my possession. I took him, or rather dragged him, down to where the boat was moored, and told him if he refused to set us across, that possibly he would feel sorry for it, or something to that effect, and he concluded that he would do so. He said, "Get into the boat and I will set you across or drown you." I said, "Go ahead, we will take chances." I really thought the old fellow tried to drown us, but he did not quite succeed. At last we got to the other side of the river, and he cursed us and left us there.

We started for Knoxville. We went up on high land so that we could see the country around Knoxville, which was very broken. After going up one range of hills we saw what we supposed were picket fires in front of us. We had been told that we should see them. Then we went down into the valley and up on the next hill, and saw the fires in front of us, but nearer. The third time, going up the last hill, we had gotten well up on the height but could not see any fires in front of us. Walpole said, "Where in the name of Heaven are they? I can't see them." We happened to look around, and there we were inside of our own lines, having come within the lines without any challenge, and at last we stood under the protection of our dear flag.

Walpole said "Hello!" and the men all sprang on their feet. It had been a cold night and I didn't blame them for sitting around the fires. The challenge came, "Halt! Who comes there?" Walpole said, "Friends, without the countersign." "Advance one." Walpole went up, and as soon as he got within speaking distance an officer said, "Are you aware that you are going out into the enemy's country?" Walpole said, "I am only aware that we are on our way to Knoxville, and have just arrived from the enemy's country, and come through your lines." Of course the officer in charge was very much chagrined, and said that he wished we would not say anything

to General Carter, and if we wouldn't say anything that he would send with us a guide into town, four miles. He furnished us with horses and a man to take care of us. We entered the town and were taken to General Carter, Adjutant-General, who gave us a pass into the hospital. We went there, and tried to make ourselves as presentable as we could, considering the vermin on us. We then made requisition for and were given clean clothes, and got into bed for the first time in months, and slept soundly. I never enjoyed rest more.

As soon as transportation could be obtained we started for Washington, and after arrival there Colonel Baker took me before President Lincoln and Mr. Stanton, and I told them substantially what I am telling here. Of course there were some things then that I remembered more vividly. Mr. Lincoln told me, after I had been there about twenty-five minutes, "I want to hear more about this, and I wish you would come to-morrow about the time you did this morning." I promised to do so. I spoke of the many deserters I had seen in the mountains, and of the Loyal League. I told him of the extreme loyalty of those people down in Carter County which pleased him very much.

I obtained leave of absence for three months, and after a time went back to Petersburg. I was married before going back, and I can't help telling this, because it is a big joke on me. I told my young wife that if any letters should come to Portland, she could open them, only sending such to me as were necessary for me to see; or that she might destroy the letters if she wished.

When we were in Petersburg we did not have letters for some little time. But they came at last and I found one from my wife. Enclosed in this letter was a red rose pressed carefully, and another letter. My wife said, "I send you a letter to-day from one who says her name is Lizzie M ——. I can hardly understand how you could become so well acquainted with any one in your travels in the mountains as to have her write to you such a letter as I now enclose."

The letter enclosed was something of this nature :

" LIMESTONE COVE, CARTER CO., TENN.

VERY DEAR FRIEND:—

Many are the thoughts I have of you since you passed those few but pleasant moments in our rustic home in the mountains of East Tennessee. I hope ere long that the clouds of war shall have rolled away, and that peace shall be restored to us; but above all things I hope the time will speedily come when you will return to me to fulfil the pledges made so long ago."

I want to tell one word about my dear old friend Grant. Fifteen years after the war, I was one morning at the Ebbett House, Washington, talking with Whitney, who had been a comrade with us, and was then chief of the bureau of statistics, and he said to me, "Have you seen Grant?" I said, "What Grant do you mean?" "That Grant who was in the dungeon with you." "No, where is he?" "Why, he lives here." "Does he live here? Why I have been hunting for him for more than ten or fifteen years." He said, "He lives at 228 A Street, southeast. Take one of these bob cars here, and go along until you come to A Street, then go along a single block and you will find him there." I went down. It was Sunday morning. I took my card from my pocket, thinking I would give it to the servant when he came to the door, but changed my mind. I rang the bell and when the servant came I said, "Does Colonel Grant live here?" "Yes, sir. Will you come in?" I walked into the house and sat down. There was a portrait of the captain hanging there that looked to me just as he did at the time I left him, and of course I knew I was at the right place. In a little time the door opened at my rear. I turned around and saw him coming, and walked a few steps to meet him. I said, "Is this Colonel Grant?" He said, "Yes, sir." I said, "Colonel, I want you to pardon me for calling on you this Sunday morning. I want to assure you that I am not a book agent, but am a committee from the Army and Navy Gazette, which is compiling a work on personal reminiscences of the war. I have been told that you had quite an experience, and I want you to contribute to this work. It will be bound in calf, and will be fifteen dollars a volume. Every one who contributes must send his photograph so that it

may be inserted." The colonel said, "Well, I did have experience in the war, quite a good deal." I said, "Of course you understand that this is to be a personal experience. It is not to relate anything concerning a battle, bivouac, or march, but something that happened to yourself." He said, "Well, I was in eight different rebel prisons. I escaped once, travelled three hundred miles, and was captured and taken back. At another time we attempted to make an escape while we were at Savannah, and I was captured there and put in a dungeon, and there I should have remained if it hadn't been for a comrade who happened to be a Mason. By reason of that I was released, and if it hadn't been for that I should not be here this morning probably. Unfortunately I do not know his initials. His name was Benson, and he belonged to a New York regiment. Only a little while ago my son, seeing a new name — that of Benson — in Ontario County, New York State, wrote to see if that person was with his father in 1864. The reply was that the man referred to was only twenty-five years old, and he said, 'It is therefore quite impossible for me to have been with your father in 1864.'"

I said to him, "I am very sorry indeed, but have only a little time, and I wish you would come down and dine with me at the Ebbett to-morrow, when I will tell you more fully what my plans are." He said, "I cannot, because I have an engagement in Baltimore, and shall not be home in season, but if you will give me your address I will communicate with you."

I then took my card from my pocket, and handed it to him. He took it, fixed his glasses, and looked at it, and said, "You are not Benson? You are not my Benson?" I said, "My name is Benson, sir, and I was in prison with Captain Grant of the 19th Wisconsin in Savannah." He threw the glasses and card on the floor, and sprang on my neck, and cried like a child. Then he said, "Sit down. You are just the same as you used to be. The idea of your coming in here to sell me that damned old book!"

## THE OLD ARMY IN KANSAS





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BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SAMUEL ADAMS DRAKE, U. S. V.

IN the early spring of the year 1858 circumstances took me to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. That post and its near neighbor, Leavenworth City, were just then assuming new importance on account of the forces concentrating there for the purpose of chastising Brigham Young and his terrible Danites, who secure in their mountain fastnesses, had long set the authorities of these United States at defiance. This was the so-called "Mormon War," which began with a tragedy and ended with a farce, as the administration relented as soon as Brigham gave in before the display of an overwhelming force marching to confront him.

After four years of constant and heated political agitation Kansas was at last cooling off. It was decreed that this remote corner of the Union should be the first battle-ground between North and South. The struggle was long and bitter. You know how it ended. Victory declared for the North, and the South here met her first defeat. As Abraham Lincoln said, in his memorable Cooper Institute speech, "it has been one of the relentless maxims of history that might makes right, but I say unto you that right makes might," and it was so settled in Kansas.

At the time I am speaking of there were no railroads running west of Jefferson City, the state capital of Missouri. It is instructive to let one's mind dwell a moment on that fact. Another road was being built across the northern counties of

the state from Hannibal to St. Joseph, but was not yet completed. The Missouri River was still the great thoroughfare for travellers going to Kansas, Nebraska or across the great plains; and great it was in every sense of the word, for in a journey of seven hundred miles we were seldom out of sight of the smoke of some steamboat breasting the turbid current of the "big Muddy." When I first saw it in the pleasant month of May, Kansas looked like some stray corner of Paradise, set apart by a gracious Providence as the abode of peace and plenty rather than as the arena for the strifes and rivalries of warring factions. Indeed, it was a country worth fighting for, so the cause were just, as all who have ever visited it will testify; and I could not help feeling a little glow of, I trust, pardonable pride, that my people and the principles they stood for, had wrested so fair a heritage from the curse of slavery. My first glimpse of Fort Leavenworth is a charming memory. There was a cluster of white sunlit buildings, perched upon the brow of a high bluff overlooking the turbid Missouri, like some feudal castle of the Rhine without its gloom or terrors.

General Percifer F. Smith, who was to command the Utah expedition, had just died and was succeeded by Harney, the old Indian fighter. I was frequently at the General's quarters where Alfred Pleasanton, his A. A. G., did the honors most acceptably. Pleasanton was then a natty looking young fellow in a dragoon's jacket. Many things happened between that time and October, 1864, when by one of those queer freaks of fortune the credulous are inclined to call special providences, Pleasanton turned up in Kansas again just in the nick of time to save the state from Price's last and greatest effort of the war in that section.

Harney himself was a man of imposing physique, over six feet in height, perfectly well made, and though getting along in years, as vigorous and erect as an oak. It was my fancy to picture him as a soldier of the Suwarrow or Blücher type, to whom the prospect of an active campaign was like the sound of the trum-

pet to an old warhorse, after the dull routine of camp and garrison. For those questions requiring delicate handling, constantly arising then and there between the civil and military authorities, no man could have been worse fitted; and for the whole race of politicians he had the professional soldier's undisguised contempt. War was his trade: peace his aversion.

There were giants in those days. What has become of the men of commanding presence for which the old army was so noted and so notable—the Scotts, Harneys, Sumners, Morrisons, Mays and many others I could name? Can it be true, as the wise men tell us, that the race is steadily degenerating, and that it is only a question of some thousands of years when we shall again be going about on all fours, like our ancestors, according to the late Mr. Darwin, or residing in dry-goods boxes like the late Mr. Tom Thumb? Perish the thought!

I saw these troops file off in front of the general's quarters. Among the officers assembled there to see them march was Colonel Joe Johnston, then Deputy Quartermaster General, and a very soldierly looking man indeed; with beard then a little grizzled but looking to be in his prime. I knew that Johnston's abilities were held in high esteem in the old army, an estimate to which he subsequently proved his title only too well. There were also present Colonel Tompkins, nephew of the Vice-President of the same name, then in charge of the Commissary Department, a little, short, red-faced man with a very quick temper; Major David Hunter, and Captain Van Vliet, the Depot Quartermaster. One of the most ludicrous affairs it was ever my fortune to witness was a court of inquiry ordered to investigate Van Vliet's conduct in refusing to accept certain mules brought in by a Missouri contractor, notwithstanding this contractor exhibited an order from Floyd, then Secretary of War, directing that the animals should be passed in a lump.

This precious contractor was no other than Martin Green, who, when the war came on, became the most active and notorious of all the guerillas in that section, and that is only giving

him his due. Behind Martin, was his brother, James S. Green, a United States Senator and the right hand man of Mr. Buchanan in carrying his Kansas policy through that august body. Martin Green drove his mules to Leavenworth, they were duly inspected, some accepted, others rejected, according as they were found fit or unfit for service. Green was furious, but Van Vliet was firm. The Secretary of War was appealed to, and it was then that he gave the order which no officer consistently with honor could obey. Hence the court of inquiry. Major Thomas W. Sherman, an artillery officer, who later lost a leg at Port Hudson, was then in command of the post. He was a veteran of the Mexican War, and as punctilious in upholding his rights as could well be. Sherman was named a member of the court, and, believing himself entitled to sit as its president, resolved to do so. It so fell out, however, that Floyd had sent Major Benny Roberts to Leavenworth for that very purpose, probably at the suggestion of Senator Green, and for reasons entirely satisfactory to themselves. Roberts ranked Sherman only by brevet. When the court met, Sherman attempted to open it, but was at once interrupted by Roberts, who declared himself the only person authorized to act as president, at the same time producing his order. "Sit down, sir!" commanded Sherman. Roberts then attempted to read his order. "Consider yourself in arrest!" roared Sherman. "Sir, I place you in arrest," Roberts angrily retorted. By this time the members of the court, witnesses and lookers on were all on their feet, talking and gesticulating all at once, and the sitting broke up in confusion. The question of precedence was finally settled by reference to some of the older officers, who poured oil on the troubled waters, and the inquiry proceeded with Sherman in the chair. For reasons best known in Washington, the court was dissolved before a finding was reached. Possibly the proceedings may be found in some pigeon-hole of the War Department, possibly not.

As I remember, Senator Green acted as counsel for his

brother Martin before the court. His frequent allusions to "my ill-used brother" were exceedingly pathetic, though not more calculated to excite the sympathy of the court, than the positively villanous countenance of his near relative, when giving his testimony about "them thar mules."

In dismissing the subject I will mention that the same Martin Green became a Confederate brigadier and was killed at Vicksburg. Some time during the war I met the ex-Senator at Quincy, Ill. It was impossible not to feel shocked at the evidences of a strong intellect almost wholly given way under habits of dissipation.

While strolling through the streets of Leavenworth one day, my eye fell upon a sign-board nailed up at the entrance to a passage-way with an inscription like this :

SHERMAN, EWING & McCOOK,  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW.

They will tell you out there that Sherman, whose name appeared as the senior partner, was not considered a bright and shining light of the profession. One of the stock anecdotes of the Kansas bar relates that Sherman lost his first case in a justice's court by resting his plea upon a statute that had been a long time repealed. Report says that Sherman did not bear this defeat with entire equanimity. However, his interpretations of martial law, particularly to the Georgia rebels, were considered remarkably sound. Sherman and Ewing, be it said, were doubly brothers-in-law, once by marriage and once by legal copartnership.

Tom Ewing, as he was familiarly called, was one of the acknowledged leaders of the Free State party in Kansas, which rewarded him with the highest office on the bench of the new state. He resigned to take command of a regiment raised and officered outside of the executive authority of the state by Senator Lane. Similar action, I believe, was taken here in


Massachusetts. It certainly did not tend to harmony in Kansas. Ewing was presently promoted to brigadier. Quantrell's murderous raid was made while Ewing commanded on the Missouri border, which had so long been the dark and bloody ground of Kansas history, serving at need either as a hiding place or as a rallying point for the Confederate banditti. Ewing's famous order No. 11, devastating this section, was one of those vigorous war measures justifiable by stern necessity alone. It was ruthlessly carried out. The act aroused the greatest indignation at the South as was to be expected, and was not forgotten even when the war was over, having recoiled upon its author's head in a somewhat unlooked for manner. For instance, when Ewing, who had been the Republican chief justice of Kansas, turned Democrat after the war, and was expecting the nomination for Vice-President on the democratic ticket, a southern delegate, Wade Hampton, I think, got up and read Ewing's Order No. 11 to the Convention. The effect upon a body largely composed of ex-Confederates may well be imagined.

History shows us some strange paradoxes. The regular army was freely used to make Kansas a slave state. This was when the South ruled. Even northern officers like Sumner, Sedgwick, and Sackett could obey the order to disperse a Free State legislature, and to make and hold as prisoners those men whom the people had chosen to lead them out of the wilderness of political anarchy. This generation has not seen what we saw in Kansas, men going up to cast their votes through files of United States regiments with fixed bayonets. One did not hear of northern officers' resignations because "my state" was being coerced by the Federal government. These officers acted from a stern sense of duty; and I do not hesitate also to add from a high sense of honor, even when duty and inclination often pulled in different directions. But when it came to enforcing the national authority in states in actual rebellion, southern states, we have seen what happened. In which school of chivalry will we choose to bring up our children?

Daniel McCook, junior member of the celebrated law-firm, and one of the so-called fighting McCooks, had that strong predilection for a military life which seemed to run in the family. He obtained a captaincy in the First Kansas, a regiment that fought under the lamented Lyon at Wilson's Creek with signal bravery, losing a third of the whole command in killed and wounded. McCook, however, was not in this battle, he having fallen very ill before his regiment marched. At this time a strange presentiment of death had taken strong hold of his mind. Indeed, such was the power of this hallucination that the sick man predicted the very day and hour of his decease. He lived, however, to attain the rank of brigadier and to fall gloriously at Kenesaw Mountain while under the command of his old law partner, Sherman. Upon joining the army McCook dramatically said to a friend that he would either win a colonel's epaulettes or a soldier's grave. Poor fellow! he won both.

As already intimated, when the rebellion broke out, the western posts exhibited a most sickening, a most humiliating lack of fidelity to the flag. The regular troops being all ordered in, most of the Southern officers took French leave as soon as they reached the Missouri River, not even waiting for their resignations to pass through the regular channels or taking the trouble to report to the commanding officers of the posts. One, among the rest, was Pemberton, of Vicksburg fame, — a Southern officer born in Philadelphia. Some of them made no secret whatever of their destination, others said that they were going "home;" and there was much small talk of coercion, and of "my state."

While the rebel element was very buoyant and defiant, even, I believe, in calling things by their right names, those officers who remained true to their oaths, on the contrary, seemed sunk in despondency, so widespread was the defection around them. It certainly seemed in those dark days as if the veteran officers would draw their swords on the side of the Union with reluctance



if not with chagrin. In fact one could easily count on the fingers of one hand about all the outspoken anti-slavery men among the superior officers of the army. One of the few whom I recall as faithful among the faithless, for his country, right or wrong, *coûte qui coûte*, was Jesse Reno, then in command of the Leavenworth Arsenal. There was no half-way, grudging support about him. Instead of making an issue of Mr. Lincoln's election, he practically said to his late comrades in the manner of Dr. Franklin's retort: "You and I were long friends. You are now my enemy and I am yours." There were presently at least three Confederate camps forming with their flags floating in full view of the fort; and as it had been left without a competent garrison to defend it, it was easily guessed to be the object of these hostile demonstrations. If by a sudden dash, the rebels had possessed themselves of the large military stores there, the result must have been altogether disastrous to the Union cause in that quarter. By his patriotic exertions Reno procured a hundred volunteers from the neighboring city, put arms into their hands, and thus undoubtedly saved this valuable warlike material from falling into rebel hands. A leading spirit in this company of volunteers, the flower of the young men of Leavenworth, was Powell Clayton, afterwards Governor of Arkansas and United States Senator from that state. Reno was killed at South Mountain at the close of the battle, and when he passed away there passed as gallant a spirit as ever animated the breast of a true patriot and tried soldier.

The one other officer whose loyalty stood the test without flinching was Stewart Van Vliet, later McClellan's chief quartermaster in Virginia, where his broad, good-natured Dutch features and bushy white hair were doubtless familiar to many companions. Van Vliet's chief clerk, Benjamin C. Card, I may mention as having afterward entered the quartermaster's department of the regular army. One other officer should be added to this list, although he was not on duty in Kansas at this particular time. This was General Lyon. Lyon had been in

command at Fort Riley, Kansas, where he was known to us as an outspoken Union man. He even wrote a series of letters favoring Lincoln's election in 1860. Soon after, he was put in command of the St. Louis Arsenal, a post of the highest responsibility in view of the threatening posture of affairs in Missouri at this time. Lyon was an inflexible patriot of the old Puritan stamp. He was a grand-nephew of that gallant officer, Colonel Knowlton, who fell so gloriously at Harlem Plains in 1776, after defeating the vaunted British Light Infantry. In Francis P. Blair, Lyon found a kindred spirit. These two men, with the aid of Franz Sigel, saved Missouri in the hour of her extremest peril, while Tecumseh Sherman remained a passive spectator as their troops marched out to the capture of Camp Jackson.

During the period immediately preceding the breaking out of hostilities, the post at Leavenworth was commanded by Major John Bankhead Magruder, and after him by Colonel Dixon S. Miles of the 2d U. S. Infantry.

Magruder delighted in military display. Every now and then he would have a field day to show off his beloved artillery to some specially invited guests. Magruder was exceedingly vain, was a great ladies' man, and, to render the character more perfect still, he had a pronounced lisp. In fact, he was what young fellows would call a "dandy." While he was in command of the post, the old traditions of southern hospitality were kept most thoroughly alive, so much so that Magruder's field days usually ended with what he called a collation, the table being bountifully spread with Old Bourbon and with little else.

J. E. B. Stuart was another familiar figure to us at this time. The only thing I can now call to mind of him was his having a favorite horse which would follow him about like a dog, whenever he dismounted. Stuart was whiskered to the eyes like a Cossack, and had a great thick head of hair besides, to complete the resemblance. I have since been sorry that he gave no occasion to observe him more closely.

Colonel Miles was a soldier of the old school, joining by his own life two as widely distant and differing periods as did the old flint-lock and percussion muskets, the smooth-bore and the rifle. He was punctilious, pompous and quick-tempered, blazing up like a straw fire at the smallest provocation. Two of his captains served with some credit. Frederick Steele became a major-general, Alfred Sully, son of the celebrated painter, a brigadier. To see captains who had not been advanced a grade for nearly twenty years looking forward to, yet scarcely daring to hope for, further promotion, was an experience confined to the regular service, I think, as I recall no volunteer captains of that description. No wonder these poor regulars were aghast at seeing the prodigality with which commissions were bestowed at the beginning of the war. But the time soon came when these protectors were ordered to Washington, to their great rejoicing and our greater sorrow, leaving us to sink or swim as best we might. I saw them go down the Missouri in great spirits at the prospect of getting into a fight. It came sooner than they expected. At Kansas City, which was then a rabid secession town, their boat made a landing, and while she lay at the levee the regulars became the target for the vilest abuse that the gathering mob could shower upon them. They were hooted at, cursed and finally dared to come on shore. Though boiling over under such provocation, the officers held their men under strict control. Not so the commander. The defiance aroused all his pugnacious spirit in a moment. Forgetting his sixty odd years, the old man strode quickly down the gang plank alone, and shaking his clenched fist in the faces of the surging and yelling mob, around him, dared the best man among them to come out and fight him single-handed. This was the same Colonel Miles who commanded the reserves at Bull Run. It is needless to add that the offer was not accepted.

The withdrawal of these troops threw Kansas wholly upon her own resources. What these were will perhaps best appear from a rapid résumé of the situation at that time.

Though there was no longer a valid excuse for it, as Kansas had fulfilled all the legal requirements for admission, she was designedly kept out of the Union until January, 1861, when the cotton states seceded in a body, breathing defiance as they went. Everything thus conspired to make the entrance of this new commonwealth one of the most dramatic in our history. In very truth, the stone that the builders rejected was become the head of the corner. The new state government came into being without money, without credit, and utterly unprovided with military equipments of any sort whatsoever. The new machinery was starting up under the strain of previous weakness and inexperience. The people were poor. Trade had flourished only spasmodically, under the stress of political agitation. And now at the very moment when she had just ridden out one great storm in safety, another still more portentous was heard thundering all along the line.

Still, there was no faltering, although it is true that many weak-kneed settlers left the state at this time. About every able-bodied man in the state responded to the call of the governor. From all sides went up not the Macedonian cry of "Come over and help us" but of "Arms! Arms! Ye Gods, give us arms!" Of course every man had his own rifle or his own pistols, but the state had not yet been furnished with a solitary United States musket, nor could they at once be obtained because the Honorable Secretary of War had stripped the northern arsenals for the benefit of the states in rebellion. The border was all alive with rumors of invasion; communication with the friendly east cut off. Rebel flags were flaunting in our very faces. And still no arms. What could be done?

In this emergency some patriotic citizens were sent through hostile territory to Chicago, where they succeeded in buying up rifles enough for one company, had them packed up in very long boxes, such as are used by nursery-men, and marked "Trees," and thus disguised they safely ran the blockade. Shoots from those trees were not in great demand among the rebels.

In spite of all sorts of discouragements, met at the very threshold of her career as a sovereign state, two regiments were quickly raised, equipped and hurried off into the field. It is my impression that both fought at Wilson's Creek with the old smooth-bore muskets. These were three-months' men.

In the beginning of our military organization we received material assistance from Major William E. Prince of the 1st U. S. Infantry, who succeeded Miles in the command of Fort Leavenworth. He was I believe, a brother of a former mayor of Boston. Prince was a thorough soldier of unswerving patriotism, and that nice sense of honor which so distinguished the old army. Senator Lane was different. Unfortunately, the war let loose a horde of greedy and unscrupulous men, bent on getting control of all government patronage. Fort Leavenworth was looked upon as the natural spoil of the dominant political influences. As Prince could not be used, he was summarily got rid of, denied the promotion to which his rank and long service should have entitled him, and finally put on the retired list through the efforts of his evil genius, Senator James H. Lane.

It is hard to realize that the weak little territory, which I first knew in 1858, with its ninety odd thousand people, is a substantial and progressive commonwealth of to-day, with a population larger than that of the three New England states, Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island combined. But so it is. Child of New England ideas, strong in her faith, unswerving in her purpose, like another infant Hercules, she strangled the serpent slavery in her cradle and cast it forth, a despised thing, to be a hissing and a by-word for all time. Was not this something worth fighting for?

**FOURTEEN MONTHS' SERVICE WITH  
COLORED TROOPS**



## FOURTEEN MONTHS' SERVICE WITH COLORED TROOPS

BY

BREVET-LIEUTENANT COLONEL SOLON A. CARTER, U.S.V.

THE object of the present paper is to tell in simple language, without exaggeration or embellishment, the story of what the Colored Division of the Eighteenth Corps did, and how they did it, throwing here and there a side light upon previous descriptions of their deeds of valor and heroism. That the lights are of such exceedingly limited power must be attributed to the fault of the instrument, rather than lack of loyalty to the memory of the gallant officers and brave men, living and dead, whose acts are commemorated.

Late in the month of April, 1864, Brigadier General Edward W. Hincks, at that time in command of the camp for rebel prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland, was summoned to Fortress Monroe by Major General Benjamin F. Butler, commanding the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, for consultation with reference to the campaign soon to be inaugurated. As the result of this interview, General Hincks returned to Point Lookout, and made arrangements for the transfer of his command to other hands. Within forty-eight hours of the receipt of his verbal instructions from General Butler, he established head quarters at Camp Hamilton, near Fortress Monroe, and upon the same day that his formal instructions were received from department head quarters, issued the following order :

"HEAD QUARTERS OF DIVISION AT CAMP HAMILTON, VA.  
GENERAL ORDER, No. 1. *April 22nd, 1864.*

In compliance with Par. X. S. O. No. 123, dated Head Quarters Department of Va. and N. C. April 22nd, 1864, the undersigned hereby assumes command of

all troops at Camp Hamilton, Va. The following Division Staff Officers are announced, and will be obeyed and respected accordingly:

Capt. Solon A. Carter, 14th N. H. Vols., Act'g Ass't Adj't Gen.

Capt. John E. White, 99th N. Y. Vols., A. A. D. C.

Capt. Thos. L. Livermore, 5th N. H. Vols., A. A. D. C. & A. A. Q. M.

2nd Lieut. Robert N. Verplanck, 6th U. S. Col. Troops, A. A. D. C.

(signed) EDW. W. HINCKS,

Official,

Brig. Gen. U. S. Vols.

(signed) SOLON A. CARTER,

Capt. and Act'g Ass't Adj't Gen'l."

The troops composing the new command consisted of,

Battery B, 2nd U. S. Colored Light Artillery, Captain F. C. Choate.

1st U. S. Colored Cavalry, Colonel Jephtha Garrard.

2nd U. S. Colored Cavalry, Colonel George W. Cole.

The three foregoing organizations had been recruited at Camp Hamilton during the late autumn of 1863, and the winter of 1863-4.

1st Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Colonel John H. Holman; (organized in the District of Columbia.)

4th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Colonel Samuel A. Duncan; (organized at Baltimore.)

5th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Colonel Conine, subsequently Colonel G. W. Shurtleff; (organized at Camp Delaware, Ohio.)

6th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Colonel John W. Ames; (organized at Camp William Penn, Philadelphia.)

10th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Colonel Stafford, subsequently Colonel Elias Wright; (organized in Virginia.)

22nd Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Colonel Joseph B. Kiddoo; (organized at Philadelphia.)

37th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Lieutenant Colonel A. G. Chamberlain, subsequently Colonel Nathan Goff; (organized at Norfolk, Va.)

The 36th Regiment U. S. Colored Troops, Colonel Alonzo G. Draper, which was organized at Portsmouth, Va., was at that time on duty at Point Lookout, Md., but joined the division during the summer.

The 1st U. S. Colored Cavalry was not recognized as a part of the division after breaking camp at Camp Hamilton, never

thereafter reporting to division head quarters ; but the 2nd U. S. Colored Cavalry was at intervals attached to the division, participating with it in some of its most important engagements, and furnishing a goodly number of capable officers for staff duty, not only to the division to which it was attached, but to other commands.

The organization of the division was further perfected by the formation of two brigades, the 1st, 10th, 22nd and 37th Regiments constituting the First Brigade, under the command of Brigadier General E. A. Wild. The Second Brigade consisted of the 4th, 5th and 6th Regiments, under the command of Colonel Samuel A. Duncan.

The short time intervening between the organization of the command and its departure from Camp Hamilton to become a part of the Army of the James, was spent in drill, in which most of the regiments were exceptionally proficient ; and in supplying it with the necessary clothing, ammunition and equipment for active service in the field.

A feature of the formation of one of the regiments of the command (the 4th, Colonel Duncan), is perhaps worthy of mention, not in disparagement of any other, but because it was unique and had several advantages to recommend it. The usual formation of an infantry regiment was by placing the tallest man in each company on the right, giving the regiment, when in line, a somewhat jagged appearance. Colonel Duncan being given a thousand men, placed the tallest in the color company, tapering gradually to the wings. By this arrangement, his command when in line, especially when viewed from the front, gave the spectator the impression that the men were above the average height.

This formation greatly simplified the work of the captains in making requisitions for clothing.

## ASCENT OF THE JAMES.

The hour was at hand for the general forward movement of all the armies of the Union, in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

The grand old battle-scarred Army of the Potomac was soon to grapple again with its old-time antagonist, and once more the battle should be joined, was never to loose its grip until victory, complete and decisive, should crown its efforts.

The Army of the James, consisting of the Eighteenth and Tenth Army Corps, under the command of Generals William F. Smith and Quincy A. Gillmore, had been concentrated at Yorktown, Gloucester Point, and Norfolk (with the exception of the Third Division of the Eighteenth Corps, which was at Camp Hamilton) ready to embark on transports when the movement of the Army of the Potomac should be announced. The Rappahannock was crossed May 4th, and on the evening of that day the Army of the James embarked upon transports and dropped anchor in Hampton Roads.

At the dawn of the 5th of May, a motley fleet of upwards of one hundred and fifty vessels of all classes, but of sufficient capacity to transport an army of more than thirty thousand men, with their ammunition, camp equipage, commissary stores, artillery and horses, at a given signal weighed anchor, and convoyed by the naval fleet, bore away for the mouth of the James.

The little fleet of the Naval Brigade of the Army of the James, under command of Brigadier-General Charles K. Graham, had preceded the movement, destroying the enemy's signal stations.

The transport fleet as far as practicable was grouped in brigade and division formation, but such formation was not wholly maintained, owing to the varying speed of the vessels.

It was an inspiring sight, and never to be forgotten by one who was privileged to witness it, and consider himself a unit in the magnificent pageant.

The sky was clear, the air balmy, and the banks of the stream were clothed with the luxuriant verdure of the rapidly advancing season. As each bend in the river disclosed a new vista, surpassing the former in beauty, the beholders forgot for the moment the scenes of carnage to which they were surely moving forward.

It was surprising that the onward movement of the fleet was not obstructed, as there were several points upon the river banks where artillery would have seriously delayed its progress.

Evidently the enemy had been taken by surprise ; the audacity of the movement was our greatest security.

What of the Third Division? They occupied a peculiar position. For the first time, in Virginia at least, they were to be put to the supreme test. At Port Hudson and Wagner, indeed, they had given proof of their capacity, and their deeds had been published to the country, but there was an unmistakable feeling of distrust in the minds of many, soldiers and civilians as well, and a fear amounting to conviction, that they would flinch in an emergency.

These sentiments were not shared by the officers in immediate command of the colored troops, and they waited with impatience for an opportunity of demonstrating their steadiness and courage.

Forty miles above the mouth of the river, and nearly twenty miles below City Point, at Wilson's Wharf, afterwards known as Fort Pocahontas, the first detachment was landed, consisting of the 1st, 22nd, and 37th Regiments, U. S. Colored Troops, and Captain Choate's battery. General Wild was in command. Intrenchments were thrown up, and preparations made for a vigorous defence of the position, which commanded the river at that point.

Seven miles above, at Fort Powhattan, the remaining regiment of General Wild's brigade (the 10th) was landed, and a few days later, as the importance of the position became apparent, the 22nd Regiment was transferred from Wilson's

Wharf to Powhattan, Colonel Kiddoo assuming command of the post.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, on May 5th, the little steamer upon which were General Hincks and staff and a small provost guard, made fast to the partially destroyed wharf at City Point, encountering no opposition from a detachment of the 8th North Carolina Confederate regiment stationed there.

Head quarters were quickly transferred from the steamer to Dr. Eppes' cottage, on the bluff (subsequently occupied by General Grant as army head quarters from the middle of June until the surrender of Lee's army).

Colonel Duncan's brigade was quickly landed, and dispositions made to intrench and hold the position so easily acquired.

A few days later the 4th and 6th Regiments of Duncan's brigade moved out six or seven miles towards Petersburg, and constructed a strong redoubt at Spring Hill, on the right bank of the Appomattox, a position which, if controlled by the enemy, would have commanded the left of the line on the Bermuda front. The 5th Massachusetts Cavalry (colored), Colonel H. S. Russell, and a battalion of the 4th Massachusetts Cavalry, Colonel Arnold A. Rand, relieved Colonel Duncan's brigade in the intrenchments at City Point.

This post, in the spring of 1864, was the point at which the exchange of prisoners of war was effected; Major Mulford and Robert Ould being the Federal and Confederate commissioners, respectively.

The Colored Division was in the enemy's country, but scattered from Spring Hill, on the Appomattox, to Wilson's Wharf, on the James, a distance of twenty-five miles.

The enemy made an occasional reconnoissance from Petersburg toward the work at Spring Hill and also towards our position at City Point; but no formidable demonstration was attempted upon either.

The position of General Wild's brigade was an important

one, commanding the river for a considerable distance, and was coveted by the Confederates.

On the 24th of May, General Fitz Hugh Lee, with a considerable force of cavalry, appeared before the works, and after a sharp skirmish drove our pickets inside the intrenchments.

He then sent to General Wild a formal summons to surrender, promising that both officers and men should be treated as prisoners of war, adding that in the event of a failure to comply with his demand, he would immediately assault, in which event he would not be responsible for the consequences. The interpretation of this threat was that colored soldiers taken as prisoners should be returned to their former masters, and their officers be delivered to the state authorities to be dealt with for inciting insurrection.

General Wild's reply to Lee's demand was that he was ready to try conclusions with him.

Lee dismounted his troopers, and at half past twelve o'clock made a furious attack upon the works. The colored soldiers withheld their fire until the assailants were entangled in the abattis, when it was delivered with murderous effect. The enemy recoiled and sought shelter; a second and third time they renewed the attack, and were as often repulsed. After five hours of fruitless effort, they withdrew, chagrined and disgusted, leaving their dead upon the field.

General Wild reported twenty-four of the enemy killed, including one major and a captain, and ten prisoners; also that the enemy had opportunity to remove their dead and wounded from all parts of the field, except the abattis. His own losses were two killed, nineteen wounded, and one missing.

The results of this first encounter were highly gratifying, demonstrating that the colored troops possessed nerve and courage. Their critics were compelled to admit they had shown good qualities behind breastworks, but were still sceptical as to their ability to assault them.

Preparations were completed for an advance in force upon

Petersburg on the 20th of May, but the movement was abandoned, owing to the withdrawal of sixteen thousand troops from the Bermuda front under General W. F. Smith, to reinforce the Army of the Potomac at Cold Harbor.

It was believed by General Butler that the defences of Petersburg had been weakened by the withdrawal of troops to send to the Army of Northern Virginia, and he planned to send General Hincks to attempt the capture of the city, with reasonable expectations of success.

General Gillmore, learning of the contemplated movement, expressed a desire to command it, and his request was acceded to.

On the ninth of June the demonstration was made with a column of sixty-five hundred infantry and artillery under the command of General Gillmore, besides a body of cavalry, numbering thirteen hundred, under the command of General A. V. Kautz. Of the infantry comprising General Gillmore's force the Third Division contributed three regiments, about nineteen hundred men, with General Hincks in command.

The troops from the Bermuda front had crossed the pontoon bridge at Broadway landing, by half past three o'clock in the morning, where they were joined by General Hincks. At five o'clock the column was in motion, the cavalry in advance, closely followed by the colored troops.

The route of the cavalry was southerly, crossing the City Point, Jordan's Point, Prince George and Norfolk and Petersburg roads (a détour of nearly twenty miles), to the Jerusalem plank road, striking the latter at a point about four miles from the enemy's intrenched line.

At seven o'clock the colored troops encountered the Confederate pickets at Bailey's Creek, on the Jordan's Point road, and drove them within their works on that front.

General Hincks took a position near the Ruffin house, with skirmishers advanced to the crest from which could be obtained a view of the enemy's line of works.

It was now ten o'clock. Two hours later the three regiments of colored troops were withdrawn a short distance, and at one o'clock by order of General Gillmore fell back to Bryant's house and by a subsequent order, at two P.M. General Hincks' command rejoined General Gillmore's column at Baylor's farm.

Meanwhile General Kautz had moved up the Jerusalem plank road, gone within the enemy's works, destroyed their camps, and captured forty-two prisoners ; but hearing nothing from the infantry, had withdrawn by the same route by which he had advanced, without encountering opposition.

Nightfall found all the troops participating in this reconnoissance back in their camps, wondering what the day's work had amounted to.

The movements of the Colored Division on the fifteenth of June were in some respects a repetition of those of the 9th, but executed under changed conditions, and with better, if not entirely satisfactory results.

The strength of the division was increased, the 1st Regiment having joined from Wilson's Wharf, constituting with the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry dismounted, a brigade under command of Colonel Holman, and the 22nd Regiment had been brought up from Powhattan and assigned to Colonel Duncan's brigade.

It was understood that this time there would be no turning back ; accordingly the comfortable head quarters which we had occupied since the fifth of May were abandoned, and all necessary preparations made to take the field and fulfil our part in the general plan of the campaign.

Our route brought the division substantially to the point reached on the ninth. General Smith returned on the evening of the fourteenth with the column he had commanded at Cold Harbor, disembarking from transports near Broadway landing, but on the Bermuda side.

At an early hour on the fifteenth, his two divisions, commanded by Generals Brooks and Martindale, crossed on the

pontoon bridge, and preceded by General Kautz's cavalry and the Colored Division (the latter being now a part of General Smith's command) moved in the direction of the Petersburg intrenchments. The cavalry encountered the pickets of the enemy on the City Point road, and soon discovered a considerable force with two pieces of artillery in position, protected by an earth-work which had been erected since our former visit, contesting its advance.

General Kautz moved to the left without engaging this force, leaving the 3rd (of the Colored Division) to dislodge them. The field work referred to was on Baylor's farm, in an open field, and commanded the City Point road. It was hidden from view by a strip of timber perhaps one hundred and fifty yards in width, with a dense undergrowth which separated the open ground in which it stood from another open field, over which the Colored Division must advance. The City Point road led through this timber.

Dispositions were quickly made for the attack, Duncan's brigade being formed in two lines, the 4th and 6th Regiments on the right of the road, and the 22nd and 5th on the left, the 4th and 22nd Regiments being in the front line. Holman's brigade was still further to the left.

Skirmishers were thrown forward and the line of battle advanced across the open field in splendid style, though the enemy's artillery had perfect range and their practice was good.

There was no giving way on any part of the line, although progress through the wood was slow, owing to the tangled undergrowth through which they were obliged to force their way.

Emerging from the timber, the line charged with a rush, the enemy retreating before the furious onset, leaving one of their guns in possession of the 22nd Regiment.

General Hincks and staff closely followed the line of battle moving on the road, and upon reaching the work just captured, found a group of colored soldiers indulging in extravagant

demonstrations of delight at their victory, one sable son of Mars being astride the captured gun as if it were a hobby horse, and disclosing a wide expanse of ivory.

Addressing him the general inquired, "What has become of the Johnnies?"

"Well, sah, dey jes' done lit out; didn't car' to make close 'quaintance. Reckon dey must ha' smelled us."

The column was quickly reformed and moving to the left, soon reached the Jordan's Point road, on which the division advanced.

General Brooks and Martindale moved on the City Point and river roads, later going into position in front of the works on the enemy's left. It was now nine o'clock. Reaching the Jordan's Point road at a point nearly two miles from the intrenchments, a company of colored cavalry, from Colonel Coles' regiment, commanded by Captain Robert Dollard, accompanied by Captain Livermore of the division staff, was placed in advance, and forced back the enemy's skirmishers. At a favorable point this company dashed up the road, through the enemy's skirmish line, and deploying to the right and left, cut out from under their guns and brought to the rear a number of prisoners, about equal in number to their own strength.

The division was in position in front of the enemy's works on that part of the line soon after one o'clock P. M., with skirmishers advanced beyond the crest overlooking the enemy's position, the line of battle slightly in the rear of the highest point intervening, and but slightly protected by it, from the fire of the batteries in our front and flanks.

Generals Martindale and Brooks had meanwhile taken their positions so that the line was in the following order: General Martindale on the right, General Brooks in the centre, and General Hincks on the left; General Kautz operating independently still farther to the left.

The Petersburg defences consisted of a line encircling the city and a distance about two miles from it, of strong redans or

batteries connected by infantry parapets with high profiles, and all with ditches. The line commencing at the Appomattox river on the north of the city, extended nearly a mile in an easterly direction, thence southerly, considerably beyond the position of the Colored Division, and thence around to the river, on the other side of the city. The length of the entire line was upwards of seven miles. The redans were numbered from our right consecutively, battery five forming the salient, and commanded the approaches on both northern and eastern fronts.

The right of the line of the Colored Division was nearly opposite battery six, and connected with the 13th New Hampshire which formed the left of General Brooks' division, and overlapped battery five.

The connection with General Brooks' division was not absolutely perfect, a swamp intervening, but the gap was inconsiderable.

For five hours the command remained in this exposed position, swept by, at least, four of the enemy's batteries, momentarily expecting the signal to attack, and under orders to be ready for instant response.

There they remained throughout the afternoon, hostile shot and shell doing their deadly work until the list of casualties was formidable, the oppressive heat adding to their discomfort, and they were unable to strike a blow in return. It was indeed a severe test for inexperienced troops.

At half-past six the long expected summons came, the skirmish line, which had previously been doubled, was ordered to assault along the whole front. The line moved forward promptly and steadily across the intervening space, in the face of a galling artillery and musketry fire from the parapets; up the slope which was surmounted by the enemy's fortifications, over the parapet, inside the works, capturing all the guns in position and many prisoners, although many of the Confederates retreated in confusion toward what they must have considered the doomed

city. The main line then advanced and occupied the captured line of works.

The charge was simultaneous on the part of the Colored Division and the division under command of General Brooks, and resulted in the capture of the entire line as far to the left as battery number ten, which was situated at the point where the Jordan's Point road entered the line. There was at that time no obstruction between us and Petersburg.

The Third Division claimed for its share, the line from battery number seven to battery number ten, both inclusive, and immediately after the occupation of the line, a regiment moved to the left inside the Confederate line, and occupied battery eleven also, which was near the Dunn house.

The claim has been advanced by at least two eminent authorities, General Grant, in his memoirs, and General Butler, that it was the colored troops that captured the entire line. The claim is not justified by the facts. The left of General Brooks' division, or the 13th New Hampshire, captured battery five and the line to and including battery six; and those works were the spoils of General Brooks' division.

The casualties of the Colored Division, including the affair of the morning, at Baylor's farm, were five hundred and seven killed and wounded, among the latter being Colonel Russell of the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry (temporarily attached to the division) and Lieut. Colonel Goff of the 22nd U. S. Colored Troops. (Colonel Goff returned to duty in November as colonel of the 37th U. S. C. T.)

No attempt was made to press the advantage secured that night, and the colored troops which had sustained themselves so well throughout the day (receiving commendation for their gallantry, in general orders from General Smith), were not allowed to occupy the line they had won, but were withdrawn, being relieved by the Second Corps which had come up late in the afternoon or early evening.

It was a victory for which the active participants and the

country were grateful ; but in view of the conditions then existing, the numbers and character of the forces opposing, the absence of Lee's Army, and the proximity of the veterans of the Army of the Potomac, it is a pertinent question whether it might not have been still more decisive and far reaching in its results.

Let the question be answered in the Yankee fashion, by asking others. 1st. Would the defence of the Confederates have been more stubborn at two o'clock than at half past six, when they must have been emboldened by the apparent timidity of their assailants during the the whole afternoon? 2nd. Would the assault have been less vigorous and determined at two o'clock, when the colored troops, at least, were elated at their success of the morning, than at sunset, after having been subjected to the demoralizing influences of the afternoon's exposure?

Candid answers to these questions will suggest the answer to the former, and compel the admission that the same qualities of leadership which were displayed in such a marked degree in the campaign resulting in the surrender of Lee's Army at Appomattox, if exercised on that day, would have given the Army of the James possession of Petersburg, and greatly simplified subsequent operations.

The Army alas, possessed but one Phil Sheridan !

The division was assigned a place on the right of the line during the earlier stages of the siege and division head quarters were established on the right, near the City Point road.

A battalion of sharp-shooters was organized by a detail of two hundred picked men from the command, suitably officered, which furnished a provost and head quarters guard.

While occupying this position an order was promulgated, requiring public religious services at division head quarters on Sundays. Pursuant to the order, a colored chaplain was detailed to conduct the service the following Sunday, and as the fact became known there was a large congregation, including many representatives from neighboring head quarters.

The service was unique ; the singing by the congregation hearty, as usual ; the officiating clergyman read the Scripture lesson appreciatively, and prayed with fervor ; but he was visibly embarrassed by the large audience, and his extemporaneous discourse was a decided failure, closing as follows : "Ma deah fren's, I hopes you will all 'scuse dis er — er somewhat in-coherent discose. To tell de tru hones' truf, de peculiar circumstances ob de occasion have made it jes impossible for me to ventilate myself as I could wish."

About the first of July, General Hincks, still suffering from wounds received at Antietam, intensified by a fall from his horse during the engagement of June 15th, was advised by competent medical authority that it would be unwise for him to endure the exposure incident to active service in the field.

He reluctantly relinquished his command, greatly to the regret of his superior, as well as his subordinate officers.

July 30th, upon the occasion of firing the mine on General Burnside's front, the division, being temporarily under the command of General James B. Carr, was assigned and occupied a position on the Ninth Corps front, but was not actively engaged.

In August, Brigadier General Charles J. Paine was assigned to the command ; the detachments from Wilson's Wharf and Fort Powhattan were brought to the front, and the 36th Regiment joined the division from Point Lookout.

Under General Paine's watchful eye and careful attention to all the litt'e details, especially to the personel of the division, and the capacity of his brigade and regimental commanders, the command attained a high degree of efficiency.

In September the division left the Petersburg front for Deep Bottom, from which point it moved September 29th to the assault of the enemy's position at Newmarket Heights, simultaneously with the movement of General Ord upon Fort Harrison, and that of the Tenth Corps under General Birney from Deep Bottom, to which Corps the Third Division was temporarily attached.

This engagement was the severest test of the fighting qualities of colored troops to which the Third Division was subjected, and it is believed to be within the bounds of truth to say that no other command of colored troops ever experienced a more trying ordeal.

The fortification to be attacked was on the Newmarket road, and was practically to the left of the Confederate line. It was defended by about one thousand Confederate veterans, with artillery in position to command the narrow neck over which the assaulting column must advance. It occupied a considerable elevation and was protected by two lines of abattis; one about fifty yards from the parapet, and the other a very strong line about one hundred yards further down the slope; the position was further protected by a marshy swamp or morass which was imperfectly drained by a sluggish creek through which the assailants must force their way.

The effective strength of the command was not far from three thousand, organized in two brigades, commanded that day by Colonels Draper and Duncan.

The troops were in position at an early hour on the morning of September 29th on open ground descending towards the James, screened from the view of the enemy by the intervening crest; and officers and men were impressed with the idea that the charge must be vigorous and sustained, and that they were expected to capture the work at whatever sacrifice.

Muskets were loaded, but not capped, bayonets fixed, and everything made ready for the dash. At half past four o'clock, in the gray of dawn, the order to advance was given, and the line moved forward. But few moments were required to gain the crest, from which a view of the enemy's position could be obtained.

The ground descended gradually to the marshy bottom and stream before described, and was exposed for the entire distance to the fire of the guns on the height beyond, which opened as soon as the column advanced beyond the crest, but with little effect at first.

The lines moved forward with steadiness and without any perceptible hesitancy until the marsh and stream were reached. At this point there was a little confusion, the left of the line finding the swamp impassable. This compelled a contraction of the front.

The column pressed forward across the stream and up the slope beyond, encountering the concentrated artillery and musketry fire of the enemy, which was terribly effective.

The first line of abattis was reached without any apparent check, and pioneers with axes commenced the work of removing it. Many were killed while so employed, but others seized the axes and the obstruction disappeared as if by magic.

It was still a hundred yards to the inner, and less formidable line of abattis, but the distance was soon traversed, and the demolition of the second line was commenced.

Here the head of the column seemed literally to melt away under the destructive fire to which it was subjected. It was an anxious moment. Could the men endure the frightful strain?

The obstruction delaying their progress rapidly disappeared under the almost superhuman efforts of the axemen; the officers gallantly rallied and encouraged their commands; the gaps in the ranks were filled and the onward movement was resumed with irresistible force and energy.

The last line of abattis once passed, the enemy did not wait for a bayonet charge, but fled in confusion along the New-market road towards the inner defences of Richmond.

With exultant cheers the column swept forward over the parapet, and occupied the coveted prize.

The casualties resulting from this brief engagement (it could not have much exceeded thirty minutes) were appalling.

General Butler, who was present, says, "As I rode across the brook and up towards the fort along this line of charge, some eighty feet wide and three or four hundred yards long, there lay in my path five hundred and forty-three dead and wounded of my colored comrades."

The Official Army Register of the Volunteer Force of the United States Army, states that the casualties of the several regiments composing the assaulting column were five hundred and eighty-seven, as follows :

1st	Regiment	18	
4th	"	162	
5th	"	61	(including 3 officers killed and 11 wounded)
6th	"	203	
22nd	"	15	
36th	"	128	
Total		587	

From this statement it appears that the 36th Regiment of Colonel Draper's brigade, and the 4th and 6th of Colonel Duncan's brigade bore the brunt of the engagement.

Many of the companies lost all their officers, and left the field under the command of non-commissioned officers.

Christian A. Fleetwood, late Sergeant Major 4th U. S. Colored Troops, in a paper entitled "The Negro as a Soldier" written for the Negro Congress at the Atlanta Exposition in 1895, compares the work of Duncan's brigade on September 29th with the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, as follows : "Sometimes a comparison will illustrate better than figures alone. I give a single instance : Every one has heard of the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava. I will put beside it a Black Brigade of about the same number of men. Here they are :

	HAD	LOST	PER CENT
Duncan's Brigade, comprising the Fourth and Sixth Regiments at New Market, Heights, . . . .	683	365	53.7
Light Brigade, Balaklava, . . . . .	673	247	36.7
Excess in Duncan's Brigade, . . . . .	10	118	17.

The Tenth Corps moved up the Newmarket road, and in the afternoon unsuccessfully assaulted Fort Gilmer ; in which assault a portion of the Third Division participated.

Meanwhile the white troops of the Eighteenth Corps had

captured Fort Harrison with its connecting works at Chapin's farm, from which line the Army of the James advanced to occupy the Confederate Capital, the following April.

The Third Division was moved to the left during the evening of the 29th, head quarters being established for the night within Fort Harrison, and the troops were employed in reversing the captured works.

On the morning of the 30th our wagon was brought up and preparations made for serving our mess with coffee. A convenient spot was selected on the plateau over which the Eighteenth Corps had charged the previous day; and soon the aroma of the refreshing beverage caused a little group to gather, with pleasant anticipations of a treat.

Meanwhile Confederate gun-boats in the river were getting the range and occasionally dropping a shell in the neighborhood.


During the night of the 29th and morning of the 30th the captured line was placed in a tolerable condition for defence; and none too soon; for during the afternoon of the 30th three determined attempts were made by the enemy to retake it, but without success.

During the attack, the left of the division rested on Fort Harrison, extending thence toward the Newmarket road, where the command did effective work in repulsing the repeated assaults of General Hoke's Confederate division.

The command later occupied a position on the left of the line of the Eighteenth Corps.

On the 27th of October, the 1st, 22nd and 37th Regiments formed a part of the force under General Weitzel, which moved to the right as far as the Seven Pines battle field of 1862, thence up the Williamsburg road to the enemy's line. The Colored Brigade, under the command of Colonel Holman, was on the extreme right, beyond the railroad at Fair Oaks Station.

The 1st and 22nd Regiments assaulted at a point between the Williamsburg and Nine Mile roads, carrying the work in their front; dismounted two guns and threw them outside the Confederate work.



They were the only troops that succeeded in breaking the enemy's line that day, but they were soon withdrawn by order of General Weitzel.

Colonel Holman and Colonel Kiddoo were both severely wounded while gallantly leading the charge; the total casualties in both regiments amounting to one hundred and five killed and wounded.

The brigade left the field under the command of Lieut. Colonel Chamberlain of the 37th Regiment, retreating about ten miles in a pouring rain, over the route by which they had advanced, and bivouacked about midnight.

An incident illustrating the tenacity with which colored soldiers clung to their weapons occurred during this movement.

The surgeon-in-chief and assistant adjutant general of the division who had accompanied the command, were steaming under the same blanket when they were awakened at daybreak by some one inquiring for "de doctah."

The caller was a colored soldier who had been shot through the right lung the previous afternoon, the bullet passing through his body. This man had followed the retreating column through mud and rain for ten miles, bringing his gun and equipments with him.

Surgeon Barnes dressed the wound and placed him in charge of the ambulance corps. Asked why he had brought his gun, the brave fellow replied that he "Didn't car to be in dose parts widout sumpin to protect hisself."

By direction of the President and an order from the War Department dated December 3, 1864, the Tenth and Eighteenth Army Corps were discontinued and the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Corps were constituted, the white infantry troops of the Army of the James constituting the former; and the colored troops of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, the latter.

By this arrangement, the Third (Colored) Division of the Eighteenth Corps became the First Division of the Twenty-

fifth Corps, with Brigadier General Charles J. Paine as its commander.

In the reorganization, the division gained four fighting regiments which had seen service with the Ninth Corps,

The 27th, Colonel A. M. Blackman ;  
The 30th, Colonel Delavan C. Bates ;  
The 39th, Colonel O. P. Stearns ;  
The 107th, Colonel Revere,

and lost the 1st, 10th and 36th Regiments, which were attached to another division.

The First Division, Twenty-fifth Corps, saw little or no service in Virginia after its organization, December 6th, but it accompanied both expeditions to Fort Fisher.

The division was on ship-board continuously for nearly three weeks in December, no portion of the command disembarking on the occasion of our first visit to Federal Point.

On the return of the first expedition, we occupied our former camp on Chapin's farm, discontinued the practice of designating orders and correspondence, "Head Quarters off Cape Hatteras," and adopted the more familiar form, "Head Quarters before Richmond."

In drilling an awkward squad when raw recruits failed to master some detail of the manual and the instructor wished to retrace a step, the command (not recognized in Casey's tactics, to be sure) "As you were," was frequently used. General Grant practically adopted the phrase, and issued orders for the return of the troops comprising the first expedition with one additional brigade from the Twenty-fourth Corps ; the second expedition being under the command of General A. H. Terry.

To the Colored Division was assigned the duty of constructing and holding a line across the peninsula facing Wilmington, and preventing General Hoke's Confederate division from interfering with General Ames' operations ; and this was effectually accomplished.

The Confederate commander evidently had a wholesome fear of encountering the Colored Division for the third time. He possibly entertained the opinion expressed by one of the disgusted captives of the division on the 15th of June before Petersburg, who was credited with the remark, "D — d if Southern gentlemen would fight with niggers, and the government ought not expect them to do it."

For this or some other reason, General Hoke attempted no serious interference; no attack was made upon our defensive line.

The day following the capture of Fort Fisher, a flag of truce appeared upon our front, and the assistant adjutant general was directed to detain the party, which consisted of the wife of Colonel Lamb, the commander of the garrison, who was severely wounded the previous day, with an escort.

We went to Federal Point in light marching order. There was not a horse in the entire division when we landed. A sorry apology for one had been captured, and equipped with a primitive outfit, consisting of an antique saddle, a saddle cloth of gunny bags, so adjusted as to prevent the frame of the horse from injuring the saddle, and a bridle of ropes and strings. The whole thing was worthy a conspicuous place in an antique and horrible parade.

With this mount the officer rode out to meet the flag of truce. In the Confederate party was the assistant adjutant general of General Hoke's division. We had plenty of topics of conversation, as we had been opposed to each other in several engagements. He had a splendid mount, with a complete set of Federal equipments, and was inconsiderate enough to make disparaging remarks in regard to the appearance of the Union livery.

He was reminded that we had visited the country for the first time, contemplating living off it, without an accurate knowledge of its resources, that the specimen under consideration was the best the country afforded: and that evidently our affairs had

become somewhat confused and that our mounts had been exchanged, that the proper thing to do was to trade again. He was in no mood for a horse trade, and the proposition was rejected.

On the 22nd of February, General Terry occupied Wilmington, General Ames' and General Paine's divisions passing through the city and encamping at North East Station, on the north east branch of the Cape Fear river about ten miles north of the town, being but feebly opposed by General Hoke's command.

From this camp the command moved March 16th to effect a junction with the column of General Sherman, moving from Fayetteville, and that of General Schofield moving from Newberne.


General Terry was assigned to the command of the new Tenth Corps, which was composed largely of the two divisions under his command at Fort Fisher, the First Division of the Twenty-fifth Corps becoming the Third Division, Tenth Corps.

An incident, well illustrating the cheerfulness with which the colored soldiers obeyed orders, occurred on our march through North Carolina.

At the time of our visit the appropriations for highways and bridges were evidently exhausted. Bridges over the smaller creeks and streams were unknown on the country roads; pedestrians picked their way over trunks of fallen trees or a single plank, while equestrians were obliged to ford. Reaching one of these streams upon one occasion, preceded by white troops, the column was greatly delayed by reason of their efforts to cross dry shod. The delay threatened a late supper for the colored troops as we had several miles to cover.

General Paine sent a staff officer to Colonel Duncan, commanding the leading brigade of his division, with orders that he permit no straggling at the ford, which was fifty feet or more in width and waist deep.

Colonel Duncan formed his brigade in close column, the men



removed their waist belts, cartridge boxes, shoes and stockings, trousers and drawers, and making a compact bundle of the whole outfit secured it to their bayonets or ramrods. A band was stationed at the ford and to the lively strains of "The Girl I Left Behind Me" they took to the water, with arms and bundles at right shoulder, with touch of elbow and fours well aligned. There seemed to be a rivalry between the regiments and the different companies of the same regiment as to which should flinch the least.

On the march from Goldsboro' the division was halted for a midday rest near a little hamlet consisting of a few scattered houses. General Paine and staff rode into an enclosure, and dismounting proceeded to partake of their frugal lunch.

The owner of the premises appeared, and in the course of conversation inquired if any of the colored troops composing the command were at Fort Wagner? He volunteered the information that a gentleman living in the neighborhood, near whose house we should pass, was at Wagner at the time of the assault by Colonel Robert G. Shaw's 54th Massachusetts Regiment and had that officer's sword in his possession.

General Paine took the man's name and the location of his premises, and directed one of the staff to take a small escort, visit the house, and if possible obtain the weapon. The house was found without difficulty but it was without an occupant. Upon searching the premises, a sword was found, and delivered to General Paine.

In July, upon leaving the service, the late Assistant Adjutant General was charged by General Paine with the duty of restoring the sword to Colonel Shaw's father, and upon arrival at his home, opened a correspondence with Mr. Francis George Shaw informing him of its recovery.

The sword in question proved to be the one carried by the gallant colonel and was identified by the initials R. G. S. delicately etched upon the blade. In a postscript to one of his letters Mr. Shaw wrote, "The sword was a present to my son

from his uncle, Mr. George R. Russell, who purchased it in England and caused the etchings to be made there."

In a subsequent letter acknowledging its receipt he says "I thank you most heartily for all the care and trouble you have taken. So far as such words may be applied to an inanimate thing it is the weapon which has done most for our colored people in this war, and it is to me likewise as well as to you a source of great satisfaction that it was recovered and restored by officers of colored troops."

Time and space will not allow of a minute description of the subsequent movements of the Colored Division ; of the junction with Sherman's victorious army near the battle field of Bentonville ; the occupation of Raleigh ; the surrender of Johnston ; the review of the combined armies by General Sherman, and the closing scenes connected with the homeward march.

There are many interesting incidents, ranging from the ludicrous to the pathetic, but the limits of this paper will not permit reference to them.

The story of the part taken by the colored soldier in the war which resulted in establishing the freedom of his race will at the hands of some future historian form a romantic chapter in the history of the progress of the Republic. —

As in the grand transformation scene in some spectacular play, he sprung, at a single bound, from the darkness of servitude to the light of freedom ; from a chattel to a man ; from a serf to a citizen ; from wearing the clanking chains of bondage to wielding clashing arms in defence of the government which had proclaimed, and which shall henceforth maintain his liberty.



# THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK

OCTOBER 19, 1864



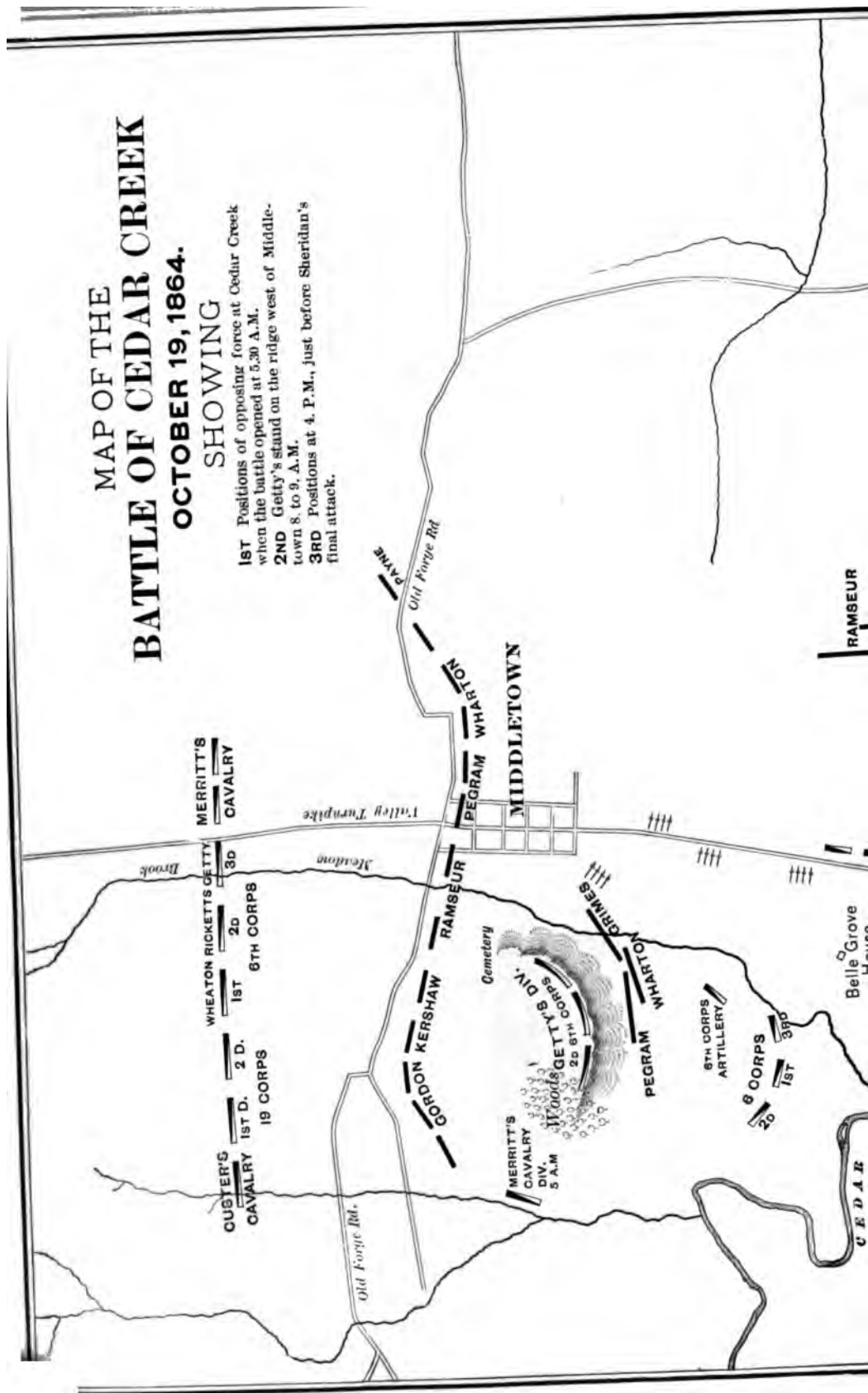


## SHOWING

**1ST** Positions of opposing force at Cedar Creek when the battle opened at 5.30 A.M.

**2ND** Getty's stand on the ridge west of Middle-town 8. to 9. A.M.

**3RD** Positions at 4. P.M., just before Sheridan's final attack.







## THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK

OCTOBER 19, 1864

BY

BREVET BRIGADIER GENERAL HAZARD STEVENS, U.S.V.

THE victories of Winchester and Fisher's Hill, September 19th and 22d, sent Early and his army "whirling up the valley." Sheridan pursued as far as Harrisonburg and Mt. Crawford with his infantry, and Staunton with his cavalry. Thence retiring at his leisure, he swept the valley bare with a cordon of cavalry, stretching clear across it from the Blue Ridge to the North Mountain, burning all the mills and barns, driving off all the horses and cattle and sheep, and leaving so little subsistence that it was said that a crow, seeking to fly down the valley, would have to take his rations with him.

He took position on the north bank of Cedar Creek, fifteen miles from Winchester, astride the valley pike, sending on the Sixth Corps to Front Royal, a day's march on the road to Washington, in expectation of returning it to Grant at Petersburg.

Early, reinforced by Kershaw's Division of infantry, and Cutshaw's Battalion of artillery, followed at a respectful distance, throwing forward his cavalry under Rosser, who had just joined him with a fresh brigade of horse. But the high hopes of this self-styled Saviour of the Valley received a crushing blow at the fight of Tom's Brook, October 9th, six miles south of Cedar Creek, where Sheridan launched Merritt's and Custer's divisions of cavalry under Torbert upon him, with the emphatic order to "whip or get whipped," utterly routed him, chased him at full speed twenty miles, and captured all his guns but one — sixteen taken — all his ambulances and wagons, — everything on wheels, in fact.

Notwithstanding these Woodstock races, as the Union troopers called the rout of his cavalry, Early advanced his whole force, and after making a bold reconnoissance right up to Cedar Creek, fell back four miles and took post on Fisher's Hill on the 13th. The village of Strasburg lay between.

The Shenandoah Valley is by no means a level plain, but presents a rolling surface breaking frequently into decided ridges and even hills. Although the greater portion consists of open ground, cultivated fields and pastures, there are many tracts and groves of woods, — chiefly black walnut and other deciduous trees, — but the timber is quite open and free from underbrush, affording little obstacle to the movements of troops.

Opposite the mouth of Cedar Creek, the Massanuttan Mountain, a steep, lofty and rugged, though isolated range, rises in the midst of the valley, and extending twenty miles southward, divides it into two portions. That on the east is known as the Luray Valley, the other retaining the name of Shenandoah. The North Fork of the Shenandoah River washes the western foot of the range, bending around the northern end, and flowing easterly to meet the South Fork, which drains the Luray Valley.

On the top of the mountain, at the northern end, the enemy had a signal station which commanded and searched the whole region for miles around so perfectly that the valley of Cedar Creek and the adjacent country appeared spread out like a map, and every object, roads, buildings, camps, intrenchments, and bodies of troops could be exactly located.

Cedar Creek flows diagonally across the valley, from north-west to south-east, and empties into the North Fork a mile and a half below the bridge, where the creek is crossed by the valley pike. It was fordable almost anywhere at this season, but above the bridge the banks are generally steep and rugged.

Hupp's Hill is a broad, high elevation, just south of the creek, over which the pike leads to Strasburg on the other side of the hill, a distance of two and a half miles. The little hamlet

of Middletown is situated on the pike about two miles north of the bridge across Cedar Creek. A high, open plain extends from the village to the stream, traversed by the high road. The ground is higher on the left of the road, extending back a mile or more in a broad, level plateau. It slopes down on the right to Meadow Brook, which rises north of Middletown, and flowing just west of the village and nearly parallel to the pike, empties into the creek nearly a mile above the bridge. The pike descends to the stream by a ravine. On the right, the high, bare ground fronts upon the creek in a bold curved ridge, one hundred and thirty feet above its bed, as far as the mouth of Meadow Brook. On the left across the ravine, the ground rises even higher by forty feet, in a bold headland, and beyond this, still farther down the stream, was another headland separated from the first by a marked ravine.

Just across Meadow Brook, west of Middletown, the ground rises in a high, steep ridge, which curves around to the right and extends north-westerly. It was partially wooded, and just beyond the bend there was quite a tract of woods. The cemetery is situated in this ridge, opposite the village. A wide, open plain extends from the base of the ridge to Cedar Creek, while to the rear, or north, the ground stretches away in gentle undulations of about the same elevation as the ridge.

The Nineteenth Corps took position on the right of the pike in two lines occupying the high ground overlooking the creek between the road and Meadow Brook, and fortified it with a line of breastworks, the First Division on the right, the Second Division on the left. Crook's corps went into camp on the ground on the left of the pike, the Second Division in rear of the first headland on the left, and the First Division taking position on the second headland, which was nearly a mile farther down the creek, and stood out like a bastion. Along the crest of the ridge they threw up a line of works fronting the stream. Near the extreme left of this line a return or flanking breastwork was started, and extended at right angles to the rear by Crook's Second Division.

A division of cavalry was disposed upon each flank ; Custer on the right, Merritt on the left ; and Powell's division was sent to Front Royal to watch the Luray Valley and operate across the Blue Ridge.

Sheridan established his headquarters at the Bell Grove House, a capacious mansion in the midst of the plain on the right of the pike.

The Army of the Shenandoah at this time comprised the Sixth Corps in three divisions, Major General Horatio G. Wright, of the Army of the Potomac ; the Nineteenth Corps in two divisions, Brevet Major General William H. Emory, recently from Louisiana ; and the Army of West Virginia, or Eighth Corps, in two divisions, under Brigadier General George Crook. With the latter may be included the 6th New York Heavy Artillery and a small detachment of other troops, forming a provisional division, so-called, commanded by Colonel J. Howard Kitching. All these were infantry. There were three divisions of cavalry : the First and Third of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac, commanded respectively by Brigadier Generals Wesley Merritt and George A. Custer, and the Second Cavalry Division of the Department of West Virginia, Colonel William H. Powell, Second West Virginia Cavalry, commanding, — all under Brigadier General A. T. A. Torbert as chief of cavalry. Each command was supplied with its due quota of field artillery.

Three brigades of infantry, one from each corps, garrisoned Winchester and guarded trains in the rear, besides which, one regiment of Crook's corps, the 91st Ohio, the Second Brigade, Second Division, was guard to the ammunition train, and the 26th Massachusetts Battalion of the First Brigade, Second Division, Nineteenth Corps, was provost guard at army headquarters. Deducting these detachments, amounting to eighteen regiments, the effective strength on the day of battle, Oct. 19th 1864, was as follows :—

6th Corps	8506 Infantry	600 Artillery	24 guns
19th "	8748 "	414 "	20 "
8th "	4000 "	200 "	16 "
Kitching's command	1000		
Totals	22,254	1214	60
Cavalry	7,500	with 642 artillery	and 30 guns
	29,754	1856	90
	1,856 artillery, with	90 guns.	
Total force	31,610 men and 90 guns.		

The strength of Early's army is more difficult to approximate.

His infantry consisted of five divisions, known after the names of their commanders : Ramseur, Pegram, Gordon, Kershaw and Wharton.

The first three comprised the Second Corps of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, Jackson's old command.

The field inspection reports of October 31st, Army of the Valley District, General Early commanding, give the number present, effective for the field, as follows :

Ramseur . . . . .	2442
Pegram . . . . .	2013
Gordon . . . . .	2227
Kershaw . . . . .	3071
Wharton . . . . .	1421
Total . . . . .	11,174
Add losses in the battle of Cedar Creek . . . . .	3500
Infantry . . . . .	14,674

Artillery, 1101, 35 guns, as appears by inspector's report of September 30th ; but General Early himself says he went into the fight with a little over forty pieces of artillery. His cavalry was in two divisions, under Brigadier Generals Lundsford L. Lomax, 3121, — and Thomas L. Rosser, 2206, — and numbered 5327.

Cavalry . . . . .	5327
Artillery . . . . .	1101
Infantry . . . . .	14674
Total force . . . . .	21,102 men and 40 guns.

This does not include his horse artillery, which — so soon after Tom's Brook — was probably scanty, although Rosser certainly had four guns.

Kershaw's Division, which had left Early before the battle of Winchester, rejoined his army after Fisher's Hill, thus escaping the losses and demoralization of these defeats; and he was also reinforced by Cutshaw's Battalion of artillery, and a considerable accession of cavalry, which about made good his losses, as he admits himself.

In his brief and brilliant campaign, Sheridan had apparently shattered the rebel army, and completely cleared out the valley.

There remained two ways, and but two, in which his army could be brought to bear upon the enemy. One was to reinforce Grant at Petersburg with the bulk of his forces, retaining in the valley only enough to protect the line of the Potomac River and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; the other was to move south in force upon the Virginia Central Railroad, the enemy's great line of communication between east and west. By this move the enemy's force in that quarter could be held from reinforcing Lee, a vital line of supply to Richmond and Petersburg cut off, and probably Lee himself be compelled to detach from his own army, and thereby the strain on Grant be lessened.

Grant favored this offensive movement. But Sheridan was opposed to it on account of the difficulty of supplying his own army, and advised sending a large part of his force to Grant. As such a step involved breaking up his victorious army, and reducing him to a purely defensive and subordinate *rôle*, the unselfish sincerity and patriotism of his views are apparent.

On the other hand nothing can be more admirable than the free hand the great commander gave his dashing subordinate, trusting in his judgment. Advance on the enemy's great railroad line, — or else reinforce the army at Petersburg. Do one or the other, and use your own judgment as to choice — the time and the execution of the movement, — such was the gist of Grant's orders.

But Halleck, Chief of Staff of the Armies of the United States and military adviser to the President and the Secretary of War, had his own views, likewise, which he was not slow to communicate, not as orders, — for he held no command, — but as expert opinions from an acknowledged master of the Art of War.

All summer he had been striving to rebuild and open the Orange and Alexandria and Manassas Gap Railroads from Alexandria to Front Royal in the valley, using for this purpose a large part of the forces defending Washington, which, although within Sheridan's command, he seems to have managed at his own will. Notwithstanding many breaks by Mosby's guerrillas, he had succeeded in opening the road to Rectortown, at the eastern base of the Blue Ridge. His plan was to fortify and hold this line of railroad from Alexandria to Front Royal permanently. From its western end as a secure base, an advance could be made up the Shenandoah Valley, — or, from its centre the advance might go forward by the line of the Orange Court House and Alexandria Railroad, which could be rebuilt as the army advanced. And in case it were decided to send troops back to Grant, the newly opened road would offer the most direct route.

But Sheridan was opposed to the whole scheme. He believed it would take so many troops to hold the railroad that he would have none left to strike with. Even when he started the Sixth Corps to Washington he disdained to use the railroad, although opened within a few miles, but ordered the troops to march *via* Ashby's Gap, telegraphing to Halleck: — "To transport the corps by railroad would break up its organization, and the shipment of artillery, horses, trains and officers' traps will involve so much trouble and delay that no time will be gained."

The difference between the two in their military ideas and methods was evident.

Halleck would establish his base, secure his communications, occupy a large tract of the enemy's territory, and then advance,

building his railroad as he moved forward. Sheridan would keep his army together and in hand, constantly manoeuvre to head off or threaten the enemy, and then strike him with all his force at the first opportunity. Halleck would wage a war of positions, Sheridan a war of blows.

On the 12th, Sheridan started the Sixth Corps for Alexandria *en route* to Petersburg. Grant at Petersburg telegraphed Halleck on the 11th:—"After sending the Sixth Corps and one division of cavalry here, I think Sheridan should keep up as advanced a position as possible towards the Virginia Central Railroad, and be prepared with supplies to advance on that road at Gordonsville and Charlottesville at any time the enemy weakens himself sufficiently to admit of it. The cutting of that road and the canal would be of vast importance to us."

The next day, the 12th, Grant again telegraphed Halleck: "Send my despatch of yesterday, in relation to what Sheridan should do, to him," and Halleck replied that "the substance of your dispatch of 11th was immediately sent to General Sheridan."

What he did send on the 12th was as follows:—

"General Grant wishes a position taken far enough south to serve as a base for future operation upon Gordonsville and Charlottesville. It must be strongly fortified and provisioned. Some point in the vicinity of Manassas Gap would seem best suited for all purposes. Colonel Alexander of the Engineers will be sent to consult with you as soon as you connect with General Augur."

Grant evidently intended a raid on the railroad and canal by a strong movable column, giving Sheridan a free hand, but his clear and simple instructions were so modified by Halleck as to convey an order to Sheridan to take up and fortify a permanent base for future campaigns, and even the point was indicated,—the vicinity of Manassas Gap,—and a colonel of engineers was sent to assist him in carrying out the order, and he was to connect with General Augur, who was then building the railroad to

Front Royal. In fine, Halleck simply reverted to his own pet scheme, of a fixed base and permanent advance, and undertook to carry it out in Grant's name.

This perversion of Grant's orders at once frustrated his plans for strengthening the army at Petersburg, and might have led to serious results to the Chief of Staff and Master of the Art of War himself, had not fortune bent all these events for the best.

Sheridan, on receipt of Halleck's dispatch, on the 13th, at once recalled the Sixth Corps, which had already reached Berry's Ford over the Shenandoah, and was about crossing the river, and telegraphed Halleck: — "If any advance is to be made on Gordonsville and Charlottesville, it is not best to send troops away from my command, and I have therefore countermanded the order directing the Sixth Corps to march to Alexandria."

On the 13th, in the afternoon, Early suddenly and unexpectedly appeared in heavy force on Hupp's Hill, first making known his presence by vigorously shelling the camps of the First Division of Crook's corps, which occupied the salient headland on the left. The two brigades of this division present with the army, the First and Third, were thrown across the stream to develop the enemy's force, but after a sharp affair were driven back with a loss of two hundred and nine killed and wounded, including Colonel George D. Wells, 34th Massachusetts, commanding the First Brigade, who was mortally wounded. Having administered this rebuff, Early at once withdrew to Fisher's Hill, not waiting to be attacked in force.

Simultaneously with the demonstration on the pike, Rosser appeared in force on the right, opposite Custer's cavalry, drove his pickets across Cedar Creek and advanced about a mile, but was forced back or retired, and in consequence of this demonstration, Merritt's division was moved to the right also, taking position on Custer's left and between him and the right of the infantry, so that all the cavalry was disposed on the right, and covered the open country there for five or six miles.

On the 14th, the Sixth Corps rejoined the army and went into camp on the right on the open plain beyond Meadow Brook, the Third Division on the left, next the Nineteenth Corps, the First Division in the centre ; the Second Division on the right, and somewhat refused.

On the night of the 16th, Rosser with two brigades of cavalry and Grimes' Brigade of infantry, of Ramseur's Division, the foot-soldiers mounted behind the horsemen, marched thirty-two miles around the right flank of the Union cavalry in an attempt to surprise and capture an advanced brigade. But he found, on reaching the desired position, that the brigade had been drawn in, and had to content himself with the capture of a small outpost. On the morning of the 17th Early advanced his whole army some distance in order to cover and sustain Rosser's movement, and all marched back on the failure of that officer.

On the 17th Sheridan proceeded in person to Front Royal with Merritt's and Custer's divisions of cavalry under Torbert, intending to push them through Chester Gap to the Virginia Central Railroad, while he himself went on to Washington by way of Manassas Gap and Halleck's railroad, in response to the persistent despatches of that officer, for consultation with the authorities there. General Horatio G. Wright of the Sixth Corps was left in command of the army during Sheridan's absence.

On reaching Front Royal he received a message forwarded by Wright which had just been taken or read off the enemy's signal flag on Three Top Mountain (Massanuttan), as follows : —

LIEUT. GENL. EARLY :

Be ready to move at once, as my forces join you, and we will crush Sheridan.

LONGSTREET.

At first Sheridan considered this message a ruse, but on reflection he gave up the raid, ordered all the cavalry back to Wright, and sent him the following message by way of caution :

## HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISION.

Front Royal, Oct. 16, 1864.

MAJOR GENERAL H. G. WRIGHT, Commanding Sixth Corps :

GENERAL : The cavalry is all ordered back to you ; make your position strong. If Longstreet's despatch is true, he is under the impression that we have largely detached. I will go over to Augur and may get additional news. Close in Colonel Powell, who will be at this point. If the enemy should make an advance I know you will defeat him. Look well to your ground and be well prepared. Get up everything that can be spared. I will bring up all I can and will be up on Tuesday, if not sooner.

P. H. SHERIDAN,

Major General.

Then he continued through Manassas Gap to the end of the newly opened railroad at Piedmont, and thence by rail to Washington, where he arrived the next morning.

His consultation with the authorities must have been brief, for at noon the same day he left Washington by special train for Martinsburg, accompanied by two colonels of the engineer corps sent by Halleck, who was evidently bent on demonstrating the superior wisdom of his own ideas.

General Early, in a letter dated November 6th, 1890, to General Irwin, author of the "History of the Nineteenth Corps," has stated that the signal message was altogether fictitious ; that he wrote it himself and caused it to be signalled from Round Top, a hill back of Fisher's Hill where he had his headquarters, in full view of the Federal signal men, in order to induce Sheridan to move back his troops. On the failure of this ruse he determined to make his attack.

Thus Halleck's intermeddling caused the Sixth Corps to rejoin the army, and Early's ill-advised ruse brought back the cavalry. These two blunders caused the whole strength of the army to be concentrated at the very time when it was to be most needed. There are few instances that more clearly illustrate the part that fortune plays in war.

General Wright, fearing a movement by the enemy on his right through the open country, placed both divisions of cavalry, Merritt's and Custer's, on that flank. Moore's brigade, of Powell's division, was posted at Buckton Ford on the left,

two miles below the mouth of Cedar Creek, with pickets connecting with those of Crook. Powell remained to guard the Luray Valley and confront Lomax, who occupied it with his division.

On the 18th Colonel Thomas M. Harris, 30th West Virginia, commanding Third Brigade, First Division, Crook's corps, was sent out on a reconnoissance to ascertain the enemy's position. On his return he reported that he had advanced as far as the enemy's old camps and found him gone. Every one supposed, or assumed, that Harris had gone as far as Fisher's Hill at least, and that this position was meant by the enemy's old camps, and the feeling of security and carelessness caused by his report, especially in Crook's corps, contributed not a little to the disaster of the next morning. For Early's army was all at Fisher's Hill that day, and Harris must have turned back before he reached that point. General Wright, however, was not satisfied with the report, and ordered General Emory to make a reconnoissance in force up the pike with a brigade or more of infantry, and Torbert to advance a brigade of cavalry by the back road, both to start at daylight the next morning and push forward until they found the enemy.

Now became apparent the fruits of Sheridan's rigorous devastation of the valley. The granary of Virginia lay in ashes. No more could the rebel armies draw ample supplies of bread and beef from its broad fertile fields and whirling flour mills. No longer could their forces sweep down the valley pike with loaded trains and bursting haversacks to the very banks of the Potomac. Early, obliged to haul up his supplies by wagon, eighty miles from Stanton, was unable to feed his army for any length of time, and was forced either to retreat or attack. Early was desperate and his officers were of like mind. They felt that their previous defeats and the waning fortune of their cause demanded extraordinary exertion. They felt ready to take desperate chances, to do desperate

deeds. Their troops, despite severe losses and repeated defeats, had rallied magnificently and were still game. After reconnoitring upon both flanks, a plan of attack was at length decided upon. It was the result of a reconnoissance made on the 17th, from the top of Massanuttan Mountain by Major Jed. Hotchkiss, Early's Chief of Engineers, and General Gordon. Hotchkiss, in his journal of these operations relates that Gordon and himself fixed upon the plan of attack to suggest to General Early. Early adopted it. "Soon," continued Hotchkiss under date of the 18th, "all the division commanders, Generals Gordon, Pegram, Ramseur, Wharton, Rosser and Kershaw, and Colonels Carter of the artillery and Payne of the cavalry came, and there was a conference at headquarters at Round Hill. General Early decided to go by the route recommended by General Gordon and myself, and decided on a plan of attack to which we all agreed. General Gordon, in command of the Second Corps (Gordon's, Ramseur's and Pegram's Divisions), was to cross the river at Fisher's Hill and go round the end of the mountain and cross again at Bowman's Ford, turn the enemy's left and press on to the pike to his rear. Kershaw was to go through Strasburg, go to Bowman's Mill, near the mouth of Cedar Creek, and cross or advance over the enemy's line or front of breastworks. Wharton, followed by the artillery, was to go along the turnpike to Hupp's Hill and cross after the others and press up the pike ; Rosser was to cross Cedar Creek at Mohamy's Mill and engage the Yankee cavalry ; Payne was to precede Gordon and try to capture Sheridan at Belle Grove. This plan having been decided on, Generals Gordon, Ramseur and myself went to examine the route around the mountain ; General Pegram went to the top of the mountain."

On his return that afternoon, Hotchkiss took the pioneers of Ramseur's Division, went over the route, made bridges, cut out trees, etc., and a temporary bridge was thrown across the river opposite Fisher's Hill.

The troops had sixty rounds of ammunition, and were cautioned to leave behind their canteens and everything that could rattle.

At eight o'clock in the evening, as Gordon's long column was starting, General Pegram reported to Early that from the top of the mountain he had just discovered some fresh earth-works on the left of the Union Army, doubtless the return or flanking line which Crook's Second Division was at work upon, and expressed some doubt or objection to the undertaking. But Early stood firm and the column marched on. Early states that the plan at first was for Kershaw as well as Wharton and the artillery to advance on the pike, ready to cross the creek and attack as soon as Gordon struck the left-rear of the Union army, but on Pegram's report, fearing that Gordon might meet more resistance than was expected, he decided that Kershaw should ford the creek lower down and directly attack the left of the Union works.

Gordon's three divisions crossed the river and made their way by the narrow and rugged path winding along by the foot of the mountains, now in single file, now hurrying forward, and now halting for the rear to close up. Kershaw and Wharton moved at midnight down the pike, through Strasburg, where the former filed off to the right on the direct road leading to the lower ford of Cedar Creek, while the latter continued his march over Hupp's Hill to his station. Thus, during the long hours of that cold, crisp, autumn night, the Confederate columns were silently and steadily creeping upon their foe as he lay wrapped in slumber in the fancied security of his camp, and at the appointed hour, five o'clock, before day-break, were at their posts. On the right of the sleeping army Rosser's squadrons mounted and formed, waited in the gray gloom for the moment when they should pounce upon the Union pickets and cavalry, their onslaught to be the signal to the other columns to attack.

On the pike, Wharton's infantry deployed in line, and

silently moved down the slope of the hill to the very edge of Emory's picket line. Thirteen batteries of artillery, forty guns, stood harnessed on the pike at the foot of Fisher's Hill, impatiently waiting the opening of the fight, to rush to the front at a gallop and join in the battle with Wharton. Gordon's column was closed up on the river, ready to wade the stream breast deep at the two fords (Bowman's and McInturf's). Kershaw's troops, accompanied by Early in person, were led close down to Cedar Creek — the camps of Crook's corps in plain sight on the height beyond — and shown exactly where to cross the creek, where to deploy and where to storm the works in column of brigade.

The morning was exceedingly damp and chilly. A dense fog settled down upon the ground as the dawn slowly lightened.

Across the creek the bulk of the Union army lay in slumber. After their arduous campaign the men keenly enjoyed the unwonted rest, none so apprehensive as to dream that the twice beaten foe would dare assail that large and victorious army in its chosen and fortified position. Far away on the right Lowell's cavalry, the reserve brigade of Merritt's division, was making ready to go forth on the ordered reconnoissance. The Second Division of the Nineteenth Corps was also up, preparing for the reconnoissance ordered up the pike, and the First Maine battery was hitched up; — for the First, Second, and Third brigades and the battery were to go forth, while the Fourth brigade which was in second line, was to occupy their places in the works during their absence.

All unsuspecting danger, little dreaming that the enemy whose whereabouts, supposed to be miles distant, was at that very moment crouching just across the creek, ready like leashed hounds to spring at their throats; the troops were making their last little preparations for their march, some hastily swallowing their coffee, others buckling on and adjusting their accoutrements. Thus the whole army, whether asleep or awake, was buried in the deepest sense of safety.

And now Early and his staff astride their horses behind Kershaw's column, anxiously waiting and listening, heard the scattered firing caused by Rosser's advance, the signal for the deadly ball to open. This was followed almost immediately by dropping musket shots, where Gordon, Payne's cavalry in advance, was brushing away the weak picket line on the river. Already Kershaw's troops were fording the creek, Simm's Brigade in advance and forming line. Receiving the pickets' fire without returning a shot, Simm's troops advanced straight upon the breastworks so swiftly and so resolutely that they captured the force on picket almost entire, and stormed the works in a single rush, driving in confusion Thoburn's First Division of Crook's corps, and capturing the six guns of Battery D, 1st Pennsylvania Artillery, Lieutenant William Munks, posted on the left of the line. The cannoneers were bayoneted, clubbed and driven from the guns, which were at once turned on Emory's line. The blow was so sudden that the surprise was complete. The pickets, badly posted and negligent, had given no sufficient notice. The 5th New York Heavy Artillery (infantry), which picketed this part of the line, lost four officers and three hundred and five men taken, only forty escaping.

Kershaw's three other brigades swept forward as fast as they could deploy and advance, hard on the heels of Simms, and joined him on the captured heights; Conner on his left, Humphrey and Wofford on his right.

Battery B, 5th U. S. Artillery, Lieutenant Henry F. Brewerton, was posted on the right of the intrenchment. His caissons and horses, as also those of Munks' battery, were kept at the bottom of the ravine which extended behind the headland upon which the works stood, and separated it from the headland where Crook's Second Division was camped. As the attacking force swept up the height, Brewerton delivered a round of canister into them from his centre pieces, and then ran his guns back by hand into the ravine, and while the swarming rebels paused a

moment upon the works to reform and pour a furious fire over his head, managed in the smoke and fog to bring off all his pieces save one, moving down the ravine and along the foot of the other headland to the pike, but with severe loss in men and horses, and was himself captured bringing up his rear. Lieutenant Samuel D. Southworth, 2nd U. S. Artillery, the only other officer, was killed. In like manner were saved the caissons of Munks' battery. The remaining battery of Crook's corps, L, 1st Ohio, Captain F. C. Gibbs, occupied an epaulement on the next headland, near and overlooking the pike and bridge. He, too, after firing a few rounds at Wharton's infantry and guns now coming in sight just beyond the creek, was forced to gallop down the pike to escape capture by Kershaw's men, already again swiftly rushing on.

Thus was broken and swept away like chaff, in an instant, as it were, the First Division, the half of Crook's corps, with a loss of seven guns; and Colonel Joseph Thoburn, 1st West Virginia, commanding, was killed, striving in vain to rally his troops.

Meanwhile the Nineteenth Corps, partially roused by the picket firing on the left, were suddenly startled and astonished as they heard the yells of Kershaw's infantry storming the height, their rapid and heavy musketry, and the roar of Brewerton's guns. The troops hastily resumed their places in the works. The Third Brigade, Second Division, occupied the left, next the pike, with two regiments, the 156th and 176th New York, swung back on the left along the road. The Fourth Brigade extended the line still farther back, along the pike, crossing it diagonally, facing to the left, to confront the new danger. The First and Second brigades continued the line in the works on the right of the Third and then came the First Division. Battery D, 1st Rhode Island Artillery, Lieutenant Frederick Chase, was on the left near the pike, and in rear of the works. Battery A, of the 1st Maine Artillery, Lieutenant Eben D. Haley, was in the works between the Third and First Brigades, Second Division. The 5th New York Light Battery, Captain Elijah D. Taft, was in

the works farther to the right with the First Division ; and the 17th Indiana Light Battery, Lieutenant Hezekiah Hinkson, was posted in rear. Now the fugitives came swarming across the hills and rushing in wild disorder to and down the pike. Now beyond the creek appeared Wharton's skirmishers driving in the Union pickets, and firing across the creek, and a battery opened a brisk fire of shells upon the works.

Roused by the furious outburst of Kershaw's attack, Crook was forming his Second Division, Colonel R. B. Hayes, afterwards President, on the left of the pike, and about one hundred yards from and parallel to it, fronting to the left with the small brigade of Kitching on his left. Emory hurried over from his right the Second Brigade of his First Division under Colonel Stephen Thomas of the 8th Vermont, who had just escaped capture on the picket line, for he was corps officer of the day, and threw it across the pike on Crook's right. General Wright, galloping to the fight, aided personally these dispositions, while he sent in hot haste for two divisions of the Sixth Corps, thinking that the troops just formed could hold the enemy at bay until the veterans could come to their support.

But Gordon's three divisions having crossed the river, filed up through the woods for a mile, and formed on the open plain, directly on the left and rear of Crook and Emory, all unknown to the Union troops. Ramseur on right, Gordon on left, Pegram in second line, were now sweeping forward in battle order. They struck the hastily improvised line, and at its weakest point, its left, where stood Kitching's raw men with their left in air. They broke and fled with scarcely a show of resistance, Colonel Kitching fell mortally wounded, and Hayes' division, bewildered in the fog, smoke and din, shaken by the rush of fugitives through and past them, with the serried rebel lines smashing their left and advancing towards their rear, gave way, and in a manner that has called forth the apology of the three commanders who witnessed it, Wright, Crook and Hayes. But in truth they broke none too soon. Gordon's Division smiting them on their defenceless left

must have swept them away, while Kershaw was already assailing their right, and a more stubborn resistance would only have made their losses greater and the disaster worse.

Brave officers and men in every regiment there were, who, amid the universal break and confusion, fronted the enemy, stood their ground to the last moment, and checked his advance long enough to enable many of the wagons and ambulances to hitch up and escape to the right. But Crook's corps was irreparably shattered, and it may fairly be said, took no further part in the battle.

Even while this struggle was in progress, Thomas' brigade was furiously assailed by Kershaw's and Gordon's troops in front and flank at once, and made a brave and stubborn resistance. The colors of the 8th Vermont were actually fought over ; three color-bearers went down in succession, but brave men at once took their places and the flags were saved. A monument now erected on the ground records that the regiment lost one hundred and ten killed and wounded out of one hundred and sixty-four engaged. About half the regiment were across the creek on picket, and cut off by Wharton's advance, were unable to join their command until the afternoon. The other regiments of the brigade were the 12th Connecticut and the 160th New York ; — there were only three, and although the scanty band was soon forced back with a loss of more than a third of its number, it had momentarily checked the enemy and gained a little priceless time.

The victorious rebel infantry, charging, firing, yelling, now fell upon Emory's Second Division. The 156th and 176th New York saved their colors only by tearing them from the staves, as they report. The Fourth Brigade was swept back, and one gun of Chase's Rhode Island Battery D was lost. The other brigades in the works, seeing the refused flank broken, and the enemy amid the fog pushing along their rear, leaped over the breastwork and stood on the outside facing the rear, to meet the attack. General McMillan, commanding the First

Division, leaving two regiments, the 116th and 153d New York, to hold the right of the works, which here crowned a pronounced hill, threw the other two regiments of the First Brigade, the 30th Massachusetts and the 114th New York, on the plain to the rear of the works and in line facing to the left, and some four hundred yards from the struggling troops on the pike. As these now came breaking to the right and rear, this little force made a gallant stand and suffered terribly, the 114th New York losing one hundred and fifteen out of two hundred and fifty engaged.

But all in vain. Nothing could stem the skilfully planned attacks of the two Confederate columns and the fiery onset of the Southern soldiers, now wreaking a long-deferred vengeance upon their hated foe. While Kershaw drove all before him along the works, from left to right, capturing three guns of Haley's 1st Maine Battery A, three guns of Taft's 5th New York Light Battery, and prisoners by hundreds, Gordon swept a wide swath across the plain, far in rear of the works, constantly out-flanking and driving the scattered commands that yet strove to rally and hold their ground, and forcing the broken fragments and fugitives of the corps back upon the creek, leaving them no escape save by the extreme right. Three guns of the 17th Indiana Battery and one of Chase's Rhode Island Battery D were lost in crossing Meadow Brook, making eleven taken from the Nineteenth Corps.

And all this time the dense fog, now heavy with smoke, shrouded the plain, hiding the enemy's movements and greatly increasing the feelings of uncertainty and dismay among the Union troops.

The rapid advance of Gordon's troops, covering and searching the entire plain with continuous and heavy fire, left Payne no opportunity to charge upon Belle Grove and capture the Union commander, the part especially committed to him. His efforts were restricted to picking up wagons and fugitives on the skirts of Middletown, and he claimed that he captured three hundred

and ninety-nine men with a force of only three hundred and twenty-six. He was checked by some men of the 91st Ohio, Crook's cattle guard and others, and never got beyond the village.

Gordon's advance also cut off Moore's cavalry brigade at Buckton Ford from the army, but that officer, moving rapidly across country, threw his force across the pike just north of Middletown and held it.

The Sixth Corps had thrown up no works, being regarded as a reserve or movable force. With pickets well out across Cedar Creek, connecting with those of the Nineteenth Corps on the left and the cavalry on the right, they lay in camp since their return on the 14th, enjoying the unusual and welcome rest, as oblivious of all danger as the other troops, but with even a greater feeling of safety, as they had the greater pride and confidence in their corps.

As the gray dawn began to lighten the damp and heavy air, a scattering musketry fire far off on the right startled, yet scarcely aroused, the sleeping camps of that corps. "Sho! that's nothing but picket firing," exclaimed a drowsy soldier to his mate, as he turned in his blanket. It was Rosser's advance.

The firing on the right died away, but then dropping musketry shots on the extreme left were heard, soon followed by the ripping volley of a line of battle, and then the musketry rattled and crackled louder and louder, and shouts and cheers resounded in the fog, and above all, the shrill rebel yells. There was scrambling out of blankets and into clothes, and buckling on of belts in hot haste. The dense sea of fog completely shrouded and hid everything. Nothing could be seen, nothing could be fixed, except the pandemonium on the left. And soon crowds of scattered men came issuing out of that dense veil of fog, some running, most walking fast, but all intent on putting ground between themselves and the fight. And now wagon after wagon, with here and there an ambulance, came bumping over the fields, the drivers urging their teams and casting scared looks behind.

The troops made haste to pack up their knapsacks, blankets and shelter tents and get under arms. The corps artillery, which was camped together in close order on the right bank of Meadow Brook in rear of the infantry, hitched up. On the first burst of the storm Wright had ordered up two divisions to support the line that himself, Crook and Emory were forming beyond the pike. Twenty minutes would suffice for the veterans to march the intervening mile, and he looked forward with confidence to the repulse of the enemy on that line. But now the line was shattered, the enemy advancing, and he was forced to send word to General Ricketts commanding the corps, to move back and take up a defensible position.

In compliance with the first order, the First and Third Divisions moved to the left, and the leading brigade of each was already across the brook before they received the countermand, the Third Division crossing below the artillery camp, the First Division passing its rear and left and crossing above it. The Second Brigade of the Third Division deployed and advanced up the slope nearly to the Belle Grove House and became engaged with the enemy, but was struck, overborne and broken in two by the retreating masses of the Nineteenth Corps, and moved back across the creek under a heavy fire and in some confusion. The First Brigade of the First Division also re-crossed the brook. Fugitives, wagons and ambulances were rushing past or breaking through the ranks of the Sixth Corps in ever increasing numbers. The dense fog and smoke rendered it impossible to distinguish friend from foe at any distance.

Unable to see the ground for over a hundred yards, unable to fix the position of other troops, each command was in a measure isolated, while the heavy and continuous firing, the rebel yells, the swarms of fugitives, the whizzing musket balls, the roar of the enemy's guns, which, having crossed the creek after Wharton, were now opening along the pike, and the shriek and burst of their shells, told only of disaster.

Amid this scene of dismay the artillery went into action in a

huddle, almost as they stood in camp, and as fast as the fugitives and wagons cleared their front, opened vigorously, firing into the fog and at the noise. The Third Division formed on the right and partly in support of the artillery, with its right near its camp. The First Division, only two small brigades, First and Second, eight regiments in all, took post on the left of the artillery, the whole line being nearly parallel to and a little back from the brook, facing to the left or eastward, towards the pike. The fragments of the Nineteenth Corps were falling back past or through the right of the Third Division, and it was extremely difficult to distinguish the last of the fugitives from the first of the enemy, or to tell when to open fire without slaughtering our own men.

Thus they were ill prepared to sustain the enemy's attacks, following hard upon the fugitives. General James B. Ricketts was severely wounded and disabled; General Wright was slightly wounded in the face. He had just ridden back from the rout on the pike, determined to make a stand with his own corps, and, as the First Division was forming, sat on his horse near by, bareheaded, with the blood trickling down his beard.

The Third Division, assailed by Gordon in front and Kershaw on the right, gave way, and instantly the swarming rebel infantry was among the guns and captured three of Captain James McKnight's, Battery M, 5th U. S. Artillery. But the next battery belched canister, the 10th Vermont of the Second Brigade and the 6th Maryland of the First Brigade vigorously counter-charged; the enemy was driven back and the guns brought off by hand.

For this gallant act a medal of honor was conferred upon Colonel W. W. Henry, commanding the 10th Vermont. His color-bearer, Sergeant William Mahoney, was the first man to reach the guns, and mounted one of them, waving his colors. This brave soldier was killed in the afternoon. Captain Clinton K. Prentiss led the Marylanders.

But the check was brief. Kershaw's troops, pushing

through the camps of the division, flanked and enfiladed its right, while Gordon's men furiously attacked its front and left. In vain General Wright ordered an advance. The division was forced back to the right and rear, resisting stubbornly.

Ramseur at the same time, with the three brigades of battle, Cook and Cox, and part of Gordon's, was assailing the First Division of the Sixth Corps; and that, too, outflanked and outnumbered, was forced back, after a brief but bloody resistance.

Yet these were staunch troops, and there were no braver nor more skilful officers than General Frank Wheaton, who commanded the Division, or the five gallant men who there fell in succession, commanding the brigades. Commanding the First Brigade, Colonel William H. Penrose and Lieut. Colonel Edward H. Campbell, 15th New Jersey, were wounded, and Major Lemberg Bowman, 10th New Jersey, was killed. The command devolved upon a Captain, Baldwin Hufty, 4th New Jersey. Commanding the Second Brigade, Colonel Joseph E. Hamblin, 65th New York, and Colonel Ronald S. McKenzie, 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery (infantry), were wounded. In less than thirty minutes the division lost nearly half its officers, and nearly one-third of its men.

Only by great bravery and steadiness was any of the artillery saved. While McKnight's and the next battery, G, 1st Rhode Island Artillery, Captain George W. Adams, were pouring canister into the advancing gray lines, Colonel Charles H. Tompkins, 1st Rhode Island Artillery, Chief of Artillery, threw Battery C, 1st Rhode Island, Lieutenant Jacob H. Lamb, to the left, and drew back to new position the two remaining batteries, 5th Maine Light Battery E, Captain Greenleaf T. Stevens, and 1st New York Light Battery, Lieutenant Orsamus R. Van Etten. The scene is graphically described by a participant, Captain John K. Bucklyn, 1st Rhode Island Artillery, in the Rhode Island Historical Society's papers. "Scarcely were batteries put in position than they were flanked and compelled to retire to escape capture. The enemy pushed so furiously that

he seemed to arrive first at every place we wished to occupy. Captain Jacob H. Lamb, with Battery C, scarcely commenced work in a position assigned him by General Tompkins when the enemy struck his flank, and with difficulty he retired, saving one-half his command. Out from the fog and smoke in front came a hostile line, and immediately the first battery was lost, and a rebel flag waved over one of the guns. Two batteries a little to the rear sent canister among them, and the flag went down. We drew back the guns by hand, but soon lost them again.

"Positions changed so rapidly that staff officers could not report and commanders could not wait. Every man seemed to be doing his best, and more daring acts of courage and desperation have seldom been seen. Guns were limbered up and brought away when the enemy was already within the battery."

In this *mêlée* an hundred horses were killed, six guns were lost, and one hundred and seven officers and men, about one-quarter of the artillery brigade, were killed and wounded, with only four men captured.

Thus driven in considerable disorder, though stubbornly resisting, both divisions gained the high ground to the right and rear — the extension of the ridge opposite Middletown, — where, out of range of fire, they reformed their lines and rallied the broken men. Gordon's and Kershaw's troops were too spent and scattered by their long charge to press on farther, in face of the cavalry deployed and showing a formidable front across the open country still more to the right, and the masses of Emory's infantry reforming behind them. Ramseur's attention was turned to another quarter, as will presently be shown.

While the Sixth Corps was thus struggling to withstand the enemy, the Nineteenth Corps, after passing through the former and nearly a mile beyond Meadow Brook, were reforming across the plain, beyond the camps of that corps. Here they stood at bay for some time, although assailed by some of Kershaw's troops

that had passed the right of the Sixth Corps, and by the fire of the enemy's artillery. Then ordered to withdraw by General Wright, the corps fell back to a high, commanding, open ridge, over a half mile to the right and rear of the Sixth Corps divisions. This withdrawal took place about the same time with or possibly a little after that of the latter, but instead of uniting with or falling back upon the other troops, the Nineteenth Corps retreated in an eccentric course that brought it still farther apart from them. The fog may in part account for this eccentric movement, but in truth the corps was terribly shaken by the severe and unexpected blows it had undergone; eleven out of twenty guns were lost; two thousand men were killed, wounded or captured out of nine thousand effective; thousands of soldiers had left their colors, and it was necessary to gain a position far enough back to give a brief respite and chance to reform. The First and Third Divisions of the Sixth Corps were in little better plight except for stragglers. Yet in neither corps did the troops feel whipped. They were indignant that they had been taken at disadvantage, and hustled off the field without a fair chance to defend themselves, but not disheartened. The very commands that had been forced to break, hung together as best they could through all the confusion of the fight and retreat, and instantly assembled and reformed as soon as the pressure relaxed. Not a single regiment in the Sixth or Nineteenth Corps lost its organization except temporarily, or failed to take part in the subsequent movements of the battle. The troops took up their new positions and adjusted their lines in as perfect order and steadiness as though they had just marched out of camp.

All this while a fierce contest was raging on the ridge near Middletown between the victorious enemy and the remaining division of the Sixth Corps,—the Second, commanded by Brigadier General George W. Getty. But before describing this fight it seems best to sketch the part taken by the cavalry thus far, for the pen is forced to recount in succession the various parts and

incidents of the battle, although they actually occur simultaneously in great measure.

Rosser drove in the Union pickets by his first dash, and captured an entire company of infantry — two officers and sixty men — of the 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery, at Mohamy's Ford on Cedar Creek. But he was speedily encountered by Custer's picket reserves and by the reserve brigade of Merritt's division, under Colonel Charles Russell Lowell, 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry, which was already under arms and about to set forth on the reconnaissance as directed by General Wright, and driven back across the stream. Warned soon afterwards by the sounds of battle on the left, and the portentous sight of swarms of infantry fugitives breaking out of the fog from that quarter and hastening across country to the right and rear, Torbert, holding Rosser in check with a portion of Custer's command, deployed the bulk of his cavalry across the plain considerably to the right and right rear of the Sixth Corps camps, facing to his left-front and presenting a formidable line to confront the furious and fast-approaching attack, and the horse batteries opened upon the enemy as soon as his position could be discerned.

This bold and aggressive stand checked the ardor of the rapid though now disordered onslaught of the enemy, for it could not be pushed farther without reforming his troops; and aided materially in rallying stragglers and encouraging the disordered Union infantry to reform. At about eight o'clock Torbert sent Devin's brigade of Merritt's division to the left towards the pike, to assist in rallying the stragglers and in holding that all-important avenue of communication.

Torbert's own escort, 1st Rhode Island Cavalry, under Major William H. Turner, was deployed across the fields, and strove hard to stop the fugitives, but with indifferent success. The reports of the cavalry commanders drew a graphic picture of the number of fugitives and the condition of the broken and driven infantry. Says Devin: "I found large numbers of the infantry retiring by regiments, companies, squads and stragglers. With

some difficulty I checked the rout at this point, it being necessary in several instances to fire on the crowds retiring, and to use the sabre frequently."

Merritt speaks of the immense number of infantry stragglers making across the country to the Back road from our left. The 5th U. S. Cavalry (his escort) was immediately deployed across the fields, and together with the officers and orderlies of the division staff, did much toward preventing the infantry from going to the rear, and forced every one to stop and form line. Other officers repeat the story.

War presents no picture of hopeless demoralization like the sight of swarms of broken and scattered men escaping from the battlefield, nor one that produces a more exaggerated effect upon the mind of the beholder. At the very time that so many stragglers were going to the rear, the bulk of the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps was manfully fighting under every disadvantage, and when overpowered and forced back, still stuck to their colors, perfectly ready to renew the fight and needing nothing but a leader. And many of the stragglers who coolly disregarded the exhortations of the officers of another arm, were ready to rally or intended to rally at the call of their own officers, or when they reached a good place, and this is shown by the fact that so many of them voluntarily returned to the ranks later in the day.

Now will be related how Early's victorious advance, sweeping all before it, was hurled back from the ridge near Middletown by a handful of staunch troops, well commanded, and how the aggressive audacity of the Confederates was turned to ill-timed prudence.

Getty's division, Second of the Sixth Corps, was camped on the extreme right of the Union infantry. Satisfied from the heavy firing on the left that the enemy was attacking in force in that quarter, General Getty lost no time in getting his troops under arms, and without waiting for orders, marched them by the left flank across the plain past the rear of the corps artillery camp, to the sound of the firing — towards the pike in front of

Middletown. Neither the artillery camp, scarce two hundred yards distant, nor the other divisions, could be discerned through the fog. Already the plain was covered with fugitives, wagons and ambulances intermixed, hurrying away so eagerly and regardless of the columns marching athwart their course that many of the soldiers fixed their bayonets and, as they marched, threatened the stragglers with the points to keep them from breaking through the column. Already the whiz and ping of bullets were singing past, and the terrific noises of battle waxed louder every minute on the left. The division was formed in two lines along Meadow Brook, near the foot of the ridge, facing towards the pike; the Vermont or Second Brigade, Brigadier General L. A. Grant, in the centre; the Third Brigade, Brigadier General Daniel D. Bidwell, on the left; the First Brigade, Colonel James M. Warner, on the right. As the lines were forming, a strong force of skirmishers, consisting of the 5th and 6th regiments and a battalion of the 11th Vermont under Major Johnson of the 2nd Vermont, dashed across the brook, drove back the enemy's skirmishers through the open woods there with a rough hand, and captured several prisoners. On Getty's right, its flank within thirty yards, a well-dressed line of other Union troops extended to the right into the fog. These were of the First Division, Sixth Corps.

As soon as his lines were formed, Getty advanced across Meadow Brook and swung forward his left considerably, reaching towards the pike, and again straightened and adjusted his lines preparatory to advancing into the fight. At this moment, save an annoying skirmish fire, no attack was making on Getty, but sweeping across the fog and smoke laden plain in front, from left to right, resounded the unmistakable and awful noises of a fierce and heavy fight. The crash and crackle of musketry, the boom of guns and burst of shells, mingled with yells and cheers. Far to the right, in the fog were heard the echoing roar of the corps artillery, and the rolling musketry of the infantry. Now at last the rebel onslaught could be repulsed and hurled back, and the course of disaster stopped if not retrieved.

Thus confident that the enemy could never break through the other divisions, Getty resolved to move forward, wheeling to the right, and smite the charging Confederates in flank with the whole weight of his division. Orders were given the brigade commanders to this effect, the right brigade to commence the movement, the second and third immediately to take it up.

Getty bestrode his horse just in front of the right of his line; his staff officers galloped back to him and reported that the brigade commanders were all ready to advance, and he turned to give the final order, when the troops on his right were seen to break and fly in the utmost confusion. As far down the line as could be seen in the fog, the men were breaking successively, file after file, like a row of toppling bricks set up in play by some sportive urchin. We could see the break run along the line until it came to the last man next to the division, and he, too, sprang from his place and ran back after the others, and in a few minutes not a vestige remained of that well-ordered and apparently firm and steadfast line. Whatever may have occurred within that pall of smoke and fog, it is certain that there was no pressure to excuse the giving way of that line, as far as one could see.

Thus in the very act of delivering his well-timed, if desperate blow, Getty beheld his *point d'appui* give way, leaving his right without support, so now both flanks were in air, and the whole infantry of the army broken and driven in confusion, save only his own scanty division, while on his right front, amidst the fog and smoke appeared the enemy's battle line. In this emergency — without supports, without orders, — in the open indefensible plain where a few moments would bring the victorious Confederates charging upon his defenceless flanks, and not one ray shone amid the universal wreck and ruin, — Getty, with prompt and cool decision, moved his troops in line facing by the rear rank, back across the brook to the foot of the ridge. Then, moving up its slope he posted them in a single line extending right and left as far as possible. His right, Warner's First

Brigade, rested upon a heavy patch of woods and extended into it by the front of two regiments. The Vermonters held and extended around the curve of the ridge, and the Third Brigade was pushed along and back on the ridge to the left and rear, until opposite the village, where its flanking regiment connected by a strong skirmish line with the cavalry skirmishers of Moore's brigade of the Second Cavalry Division, which had just come up from Buckton Ford and was boldly thrown across the pike in rear of the hamlet.

One regiment of Warner's brigade, the 139th Pennsylvania, remained on the plain at the foot of the ridge to support Lamb's Battery C, 1st Rhode Island Artillery, which had just been placed in battery here by Colonel Tompkins, as already stated, and was soon forced to fall back with the battery to the right along the foot of the ridge where it met the First Division, and remained with these troops until afternoon, when it rejoined its brigade. With this exception the division was intact throughout the entire day.

The withdrawal to the ridge was made with coolness and deliberation. The brigade and regimental commanders posted and adjusted their lines along the crest so as best to meet the impending attack which they coolly awaited with well-founded confidence. The skirmishers were drawn in to the foot of the ridge.

The provost guard was posted in a line of sentinels across the rear, to arrest stragglers as usual. Colonel B. W. Crowninshield, in his interesting paper on Cedar Creek, states that he assisted in posting these guards, and speaks of the good order and steadiness with which Getty's fine division took up its position.

Nor had they long to wait. The gray lines of Pegram's division soon came advancing swiftly up the steep slope, and struck the troops awaiting them on the crest. The heaviest of the attack fell upon Warner's brigade. Getty's veterans coolly held their fire until the enemy was close upon them, then deliv-

ered it in their very faces, and tumbled the shattered ranks down the hill, pursued to the foot by Warner's two right regiments.

In their rapid advance, Grimes' Brigade, the rear or left brigade of Ramseur's Division, became separated from the other three brigades. After taking part in driving the Union troops across the pike, Grimes advanced along the highway towards Middletown while the others were so vigorously assailing the First Division and artillery of the Sixth Corps, thus opening an interval or gap between himself and them. Pegram's Division, which was the reserve or second line of Gordon's attacking column, was placed in this gap, and he it was that attacked Getty.

The enemy's shells now began to burst over and upon the ridge, coming mostly from the high ground along the pike. The troops lay flat on the ground just behind the crest, and suffered but little, most of the shells passing over and exploding in rear of the line. It was not long before the skirmishers in front of the Vermonters and Third Brigade came running breathlessly in, and reported that the enemy was again advancing to the attack. The troops sprang to their feet, dressed their lines, fixed bayonets, moved forward a few paces to and over the crest, and met the enemy at thirty yards as he struggled, well winded and tired, up the ascent, with so well-aimed a volley, so thundering a cheer, and so sudden and spontaneous a rush forward that he fell back in great confusion to and beyond the foot of the ridge, sharply pursued by the victors half way down the slope, and a number of prisoners were taken. The troops were immediately recalled and posted again behind the crest.

This attack was made by Grimes' Brigade of Ramseur's Division in two lines, and, judging from the extent of its front, by a part of Pegram's Division. In his report General Grimes claims that his troops advanced as far as the cemetery in their charge, and admits their repulse.

Early reached the skirts of Middletown just as these broken

troops came tumbling back, and there met Ramseur and Pegram, who told him that the Sixth Corps was making a stand on the ridge, and urged him to throw Wharton's Division into the fight. This division having crossed Cedar Creek by the bridge with the artillery as soon as the way was cleared, and advanced along the pike, was close at hand and had not been engaged. Accordingly Early at once ordered Wharton to attack, directing the other two division commanders to show him where to go in.

This attack fell more to the left than the preceding, more on the Third Brigade and partly on the Vermonters. Again the skirmishers ran in and gave timely warning. Again the troops rose to their feet, dressed their ranks, and gripped their muskets, with bayonets fixed ; and again, at the critical moment, just as the charging line, straining up the hill, gained the summit, the steady veterans countered upon it with a terrific three-fold blow, a sudden deadly volley, a fierce charge, and a mighty shout, and dashed it in pieces down the ridge. In their eagerness many of the men chased the broken troops to the foot, but the enemy's batteries in the edge of the village raked them well, inflicting some loss, and soon all were brought back to the shelter of the crest, and the line was reestablished. In these attacks the enemy's losses must have been heavy, for at one place alone near the bend of the ridge, thirty-four of his dead were found lying on the slope the next day.

Wharton reported to Early not only that his division was repulsed, but that the Sixth Corps was advancing, and the Confederate commanders, impressed by this fierce rebuff, felt themselves thrown upon the defensive. Wofford's Brigade of Kershaw's Division was close at hand — the only troops not yet engaged, and was hurriedly posted on Grimes' right, fronting the ridge, in order to withstand the apprehended Union advance, while Wharton's men were rallied and reformed. This brigade, it appears, after taking part in driving Crook's First Division from their intrenchments, became separated from the rest of Kershaw's Division, and did not join in their charge down the

Union works. But Early had no stomach to renew his attacks. The repulse of three divisions, and the formidable strength of the position, quelled even his audacity. He supposed, as he well might, that he was confronted by the entire Sixth Corps, and not merely by one weak division without a single piece of artillery. He sent orders to Gordon and Kershaw to advance and attack the right flank of the force which had brought him to a standstill, while Colonel Carter, his chief of artillery, posted battery after battery on the high ground along the pike, in and near Middletown, until two score guns were hurling shell and shrapnel over and upon the thin line crouching behind the crest. But this storm, which would have been destructive and unbearable in a level or open position, while inflicting some loss, only made the troops hug the ground the closer, without shaking their confidence a whit.

At this juncture Early, with half his army, was, if not on the defensive, at least brought to a halt in front of Getty's one small division of infantry, which he was furiously bombarding with most of his artillery; while the other half of his army, under Gordon and Kershaw, had driven all the rest of the Union infantry, six divisions, from their positions, and had put them *hors de combat* for the moment.

Getty's troops sustained this iron tempest unflinchingly for half an hour. During this time a staff officer notified him that General Ricketts had been severely wounded, and that the command of the Sixth Corps had devolved upon him. Thus far he had manoeuvred and fought his troops unaided and without orders, nor was it possible that he could receive any, for General Ricketts was disabled early in the battle, and General Wright, after riding back from the rout on the pike and rejoining the First and Third Divisions of his corps, was forced to retreat with them and the Nineteenth Corps to the right and rear.

Determined to hold his position to the last, and impressed with the importance of holding the enemy in check as long as

possible, Getty remained with his own division, placing General L. A. Grant in immediate command of it and sent orders to the other divisions to conform to the movements of the Second. The enemy, making no more infantry attacks, kept up his artillery fire for half an hour, when some scattering musketry was heard on the right flank, and Colonel Warner reported that the Confederates were driving back his skirmishers on that flank and pushing a column past it. Getty had not a man in reserve. He had not a gun. His entire force in one thin line barely sufficed to fill the position, with his right resting on nothing but a piece of woods, — good only as a screen, but a source of weakness instead of strength as soon as the enemy found out the situation. Nothing remained but to get out, and that quickly. Accordingly Getty ordered the troops to move to the rear in line. Fortunately the artillery fire had slackened somewhat, and the movement was executed by Grant without haste or difficulty. Facing by the rear rank, each brigade marched across the open fields for half a mile to a cross-road known as the Old Furnace Road, which intersected the pike just north of Middletown and extended across country. Here they halted and faced about ; the lines were readjusted, skirmishers thrown out and the cartridge boxes refilled. The enemy, unconscious of the movement, was still shelling the abandoned crest. By this time the fog had all disappeared and given way to a bright sunny day.

One loss, but that a severe one, marked this retrograde movement. Just as it began, General D. D. Bidwell, commanding the Third Brigade, was mortally wounded by a shell. As colonel of the 49th New York he rose to the command of the brigade by faithful and gallant service. Of stalwart presence, with a countenance marked by firmness, good sense and kindly feeling, always careful of his men, and cool, steadfast and brave in action, he had won the love of his command and the esteem and confidence of all. The whole corps mourned his death.

Early, it will be recollected, when repulsed by Getty's

stand, called upon Gordon and Kershaw for aid to drive the obstacle from his path. He did not realize the full measure of their astonishing success. Oblivious or regardless of the fact that no troops could make such a long and heroic charge and overcome such determined resistance without suffering heavy losses and becoming more or less disordered, he expected them instantly to make a new attack, and begrudged them the time necessary to reform, and, more discreditable yet, he ever afterwards persisted in reproaching these brave soldiers with ill founded charges of disorder and delay.

In fact, they reformed and advanced in surprisingly short time, and it was their movement which flanked Getty's position, and compelled him to withdraw.

While Getty was thus successfully maintaining an unequal contest on the ridge, the other divisions of the Sixth Corps and the Nineteenth Corps were halted and reforming in separate bodies far to his right and rear, as already narrated. General Wright ordered these troops to move to the rear and left in order to unite them, and take up some suitable position to secure the valley pike, that vital communication. This movement was made just before Getty withdrew from the ridge, and just as Gordon and Kershaw began their second advance.

Colonel Crowninshield says that after seeing Getty's division take position on the ridge, he rode across country to the right, found the Nineteenth Corps there on a hill, reformed and making breastworks, while General Emory declared that he would retreat no farther; that he remained there until the corps fell back under orders from General Wright; he saw the First Division, Sixth Corps, moving back also, and witnessed the advance of Gordon's and Kershaw's Divisions, "who were slowly and in fine order coming up the slope, their guns throwing solid shot up the hill at Emory's corps."

General Wright at 9 A.M. ordered Torbert to throw all the cavalry to the left to hold the pike.

Finding himself still isolated and unsupported at the cross-

road, the country all open and the pike a quarter of a mile distant, after a rest of half an hour Getty moved his division by the flank to the left and rear, soon reached the highway and took up another position three quarters of a mile north of Middletown, the left, the Third Brigade, resting on the pike, the line extending at right angles thereto to the right, across the low valley of Meadow Brook, up the farther slope, and some distance into a tract of open woods, the Vermonters in the centre, Warner's First Brigade on the right. Skirmishers were thrown out well to the front. The troops set to work piling up rude breastworks of rails, rocks and earth, and although expecting an attack at any moment, all drew a long sigh of relief, feeling that now the pike was secured, the worst was over. One gun of Lamb's battery took position behind the line and began replying to the enemy's batteries in Middletown.

This was a very weak and exposed position; the left and centre on low ground dominated by that in front and on the left, and the right simply screened by the woods, but a small force of cavalry on the left of the pike was gallantly breasting the village, and Getty took up the most advanced position possible to support them. This was Devin with the Third Brigade of the First Division of cavalry, which had already joined Moore's brigade, and was soon after reinforced by Colonel Charles Russell Lowell with the reserve brigade. Their dismounted troops lined the stone walls in the outskirts of the village, while the mounted squadrons and horse artillery boldly took position in the open fields on the left, as though about to attack, and so completely did the aggressive attitude of these brilliant officers impose upon Early that instead of pushing forward his available and ample force of infantry down the pike, he posted them to resist an attack and secure his right flank.

Soon after Getty took up his last position, Kidd's brigade, the First of Merritt's First Division of cavalry, arrived and took post on Devin's and Lowell's left, and Custer, leaving Colonel Wil-

liam Wells of the 1st Vermont Cavalry with three regiments to hold Rosser in check, moved over his division and extended the cavalry line still farther on that flank. Moore's brigade was shifted to the extreme left. Thus one division of infantry — Getty, — held the right of the pike, and two divisions of cavalry, Merritt and Custer, with Moore's brigade of Powell's division, the left.

The rest of the infantry meantime, by their retrograde movement, had placed themselves as follows : The First and Third Divisions of the Sixth Corps a mile in rear of Getty, and next the pike ; the Nineteenth Corps somewhat farther to the rear and right, massed and awaiting orders.

Soon afterwards the Second Brigade of the Third Division, Sixth Corps, moved up and extended Getty's line to the right. Colonel R. B. Hayes with about sixty men of his division of Crook's corps, whom he had kept together all through the varying fortunes of the morning, also reported to Getty, and was placed on the line on the right of Warner's brigade, between the Second and Third Divisions. After the rout of his corps, Hayes and his handful of brave men were forced over to the right, there joined the Third Division when it fell back, and remained with it until he found a place in the front line.

The other brigade of this division, the First, Colonel William Emerson of the 151st New York commanding, in the withdrawal, in passing through some woods, lost sight of the Second Brigade which was nearest the pike and became separated from it, and with the First Division reached the pike a mile in rear of Getty's position, as already stated, while the Second Brigade struck the highway not quite as far back, and were the first to respond to Getty's order to conform to the movements of the Second Division.

It was not long after Getty withdrew from the ridge he had so well defended, when Ramseur and Pegram cautiously moved forward, found it evacuated, and occupied it. Gordon and Kershaw came up abreast with them. Early, unduly apprehensive

as to his right, shifted a large part of his troops to that flank and moved forward and took up the line of the Old Furnace Road. Wofford's Brigade and Wharton's Division with Payne's cavalry on the extreme right, held the line on his right of the pike, across his right and front of the village; then came Pegram across the pike and the valley of Meadow Brook, then Ramseur, then Kershaw, and Gordon held his left.

The enemy's skirmishers soon closed up with Getty's, and from time to time a brisk firing would break out. His batteries from high ground on both sides of the pike and in Middletown kept up a persistent, well-aimed and very uncomfortable shelling, which greatly overmatched the horse-batteries with the cavalry, and compelled them to change positions several times. Lamb's solitary gun behind the infantry kept up a show of answering,—more for its moral effect than for any real good.

About 10 A.M. General Wright rode up to Getty's position. He had been wounded in the face early in the day, and the lower part of it was swollen and bloody. He made no change in the disposition of the troops.

This lull in the battle broken by artillery firing and desultory skirmishing had lasted about two hours, when, at half past eleven, happening to be looking down the pike, I beheld a horseman on a powerful black charger come tearing at full gallop over the roll of ground and up the road, towards the front. Behind him raced a handful of riders strung out in single file, according to the speed of their steeds. As he drew near, leaving the highway, he dashed across the open ground to the little group consisting of Getty and his staff, reined up his panting, smoking steed, and hastily demanded to know the state of things. In a few words Getty gave him the salient facts. Without further pause, Sheridan,—for it was he,—rode down to the line of battle a hundred yards in front, and in a ringing voice surcharged with passion and confidence cried out: "Men, by God, we'll whip them yet!—We'll sleep in our old camps to-night!" The men sprang to their feet and cheered as only men under such circum-

stances can. Instantly a mighty revulsion of feeling took place. Hope and confidence returned at a bound. No longer did we merely hope that the worst was over, that we could hold our ground until night, or at worst make an orderly retreat to Winchester. Now we all burned to attack the enemy, to drive him back, to retrieve our honor, and sleep in our own camps that night. And every man knew that Sheridan would do it.

Sheridan, as already stated, left Washington at noon on the 17th by special train for Martinsburg, and the next day reached Winchester, where he spent the night, and received despatches from Wright that all was quiet at the front. Artillery firing in the direction of Cedar Creek was reported in the morning, but this was attributed to the reconnoissance sent out by Wright finding the enemy. After breakfast, with his staff and escort, and accompanied by Colonels B. S. Alexander and George Thom of the Engineer Corps, he started to ride up the pike to rejoin his army at Cedar Creek. Scarcely had the cavalcade cleared the skirts of Winchester, when, on surmounting a rise of ground, there burst upon them the appalling sight of crowds of wounded men and fugitives, of wagons and ambulances thronging the road and spread widely over the fields, all hurrying to the rear, the first wave of wreckage from the defeated army. Colonel Wood, the Chief Commissary, rode up just from the front and reported to Sheridan that everything was gone, his headquarters captured and the troops dispersed. For a little way Sheridan walked his horse, considering whether he should rally his troops on Winchester as they came falling back, and attempt to make a stand there, but the heroic resolution flamed up in his heart to go to the front, try to restore the broken ranks of his troops, or, failing in that, to share their fate. Directing Colonels Alexander and Thom and Colonel James W. Forsyth of his staff, with the bulk of the escort, to remain and do what they could to stop the fugitives, with two of his aids, Major George A. Forsyth and Captain Joseph O'Keeffe, and twenty of the escort he started for the front at a gallop. As he dashed on, now up the high-

road and now over the fields alongside, when the way was blocked by wounded and fugitives, the cry rose among the retreating crowds that Sheridan was back. Mounted officers galloped out on either side of the pike and rallied the men with the inspiring news. Hundreds at once turned back, with enthusiasm and cheers, and started for the front, and a tide of these men flowed up the pike after Sheridan, towards the foe. As he dashed past the crowds Sheridan at times took off his hat and exclaimed: "If I had been with you this morning this disaster would not have happened. We must face the other way, — we must go back and recover our camps!"

This remark seems unjust to Wright and his army. Sheridan if present might have prevented the surprise by greater vigilance and better picketing on the left, but after Early had been suffered to place his columns in position and surprise the Union army, Achilles himself could not have withstood the terrific force and fury of his well-planned attacks until they had in part spent their force,—until Getty's stand had checked their victorious course and made it possible to get the Union army in hand.

Sheridan reached the field at 11.30 A.M., but it was 4 P.M. before he took the aggressive. No one, impressed with the popular, dramatic legend of Sheridan's exploit at Cedar Creek would imagine that over four long hours were consumed before he brought up the scattered battalions to the battle-line, made his dispositions and was ready to strike. Yet such is the fact, a fact not less creditable to the sagacious and skilful general than the popular story, while the moral effect upon the army of his inspiring presence has never been, and cannot be exaggerated.

Let us for a moment review the situation on the field when Sheridan arrived. The enemy had driven the whole Union infantry from its fortified positions and camps, with the loss of twenty-four guns and fifteen hundred prisoners, had dispersed Crook's corps completely, and severely disordered and punished

the Sixth and Nineteenth, had met with scarcely a check except the repulse of his attacks on Getty's division, and advancing in force had taken up a new and strong position north of Middletown. His infantry, strongly posted behind stone walls, extended across the front and considerably to his right of the village, and his lines stretched away to his left across and far beyond Meadow Brook until lost in the woods. Wharton's Division, with Wofford's Brigade of Kershaw's Division, held the right; next stood Pegram's Division across the pike and reaching beyond Meadow Brook; then came Ramseur's Division; then Kershaw's and Gordon's held his left, extending to Marsh Run.

He displayed forty guns planted in strong and commanding positions along this line; Payne's scanty brigade of horse covered his extreme right. All that part of the line in front of Middletown and as far as the woods beyond Meadow Brook was made immensely strong by the heavy stone walls which lined the Old Furnace Road and bordered the fields, and by a stone mill at the crossing of the road and brook. Open ground, which must be crossed by an attacking force without cover, extended in front.

There was every reason to expect, and Sheridan did expect, that Early with his victorious troops rested and reformed and deployed and united in one strong battalion, would move onward to the attack at any moment. That he failed to do so was the colossal blunder of the day, which gave his more skilful and vigorous antagonist the opportunity of wresting victory from the jaws of defeat.

Confronting this formidable and threatening array, Sheridan found nothing but Getty's division of infantry with the Second Brigade of the Third Division and the handful of men that Hayes had kept together, on the right of the pike, extending in a single thin line across the brook and its sunken valley, and into the open woods on the right a short distance, and Merritt's and Custer's divisions of cavalry on the left of the pike.

There were only two guns, a section of Lamb's 10 lb

Parrotts in rear of the infantry, which coolly fired from time to time in order to impress the enemy with the show of strength. The horse batteries on the left manfully bore the brunt of the enemy's superior artillery, and although several times forced to change position, vigorously kept up their fire.

"I found," says Sheridan in his report, "on arriving at the front, Merritt's and Custer's divisions of cavalry and General Getty's division of the Sixth Corps opposing the enemy. I suggested to General Wright that we should fight on Getty's line and to transfer Custer to the right at once . . . that the remaining two divisions of the Sixth Corps which were to the right and rear of Getty about two miles should be ordered up, and also that the Nineteenth Corps which was to the right and rear of these two divisions should be hastened up before the enemy attacked Getty. I then started out all my staff officers to bring these troops back, and was so convinced that we should soon be attacked that I went back myself to urge them on."

Under his vigorous hand the troops rapidly moved up and prolonged Getty's line to the right, in the following order: Third and First Divisions, Sixth Corps; Second and First Divisions, Nineteenth Corps. All were formed in one line except the First Division, Sixth Corps, and a portion of the Second Division, Nineteenth Corps, which were in two lines, but before the advance the Nineteenth Corps was all extended in one line. Breastworks of rocks, rails, and logs were hastily thrown up. Owing to the losses of the morning the artillery was greatly reduced. Only some twenty guns could be mustered with the infantry.

Far back on the left of the pike and in the rear of the cavalry, Crook's troops were being placed in line as fast as they could be assembled, but they bore no part in the shock of arms about to open, except part of his artillery.

Leaving Merritt to confront alone the enemy's infantry on the left of the pike, Custer moved his division to the extreme right. Colonel Wells was still holding Rosser in check. Him

Custer now forced back by a sharp dash, and then took position on Emory's right.

The opposing line extended about two miles across a rolling country, much of it wooded, with open fields interspersed, and intersected by stone walls.

The enemy was superior in artillery, his infantry lines overlapped Sheridan's on both flanks, and he skilfully strengthened his position by taking advantage of the walls and by breastworks.

Fearful as to his right, Early had placed a division and a brigade of infantry wholly on his right of the pike, where they were confronted only by Union cavalry, so that he had four divisions left to oppose the five divisions of the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps. Yet considering the severe losses in casualties and stragglers on the part of these corps, and the extent of the opposing lines, it was evident that the Union infantry was not more than equal to the Confederate, even on the right of the pike, while the advantage of position was altogether with the latter. Sheridan's infantry, when he attacked, did not exceed eight thousand or eight thousand five hundred. Early mustered one thousand more.

At the suggestion of Major George A. Forsyth of his staff, Sheridan now rode his new formed line of battle from flank to flank, and, by his inspiring words and presence, imbued his troops with his own enthusiasm and confidence.

These dispositions were scarcely completed when an attack in some force was made on the left of the Nineteenth Corps, but was repulsed. Sheridan, from high ground on the left, observing the movement, sent word to that portion of his line to be ready to meet it; and to make all safe the Vermont Brigade was withdrawn from Getty's line, moved over to the right, and posted in rear of the threatened point, while two regiments of Getty's Third Brigade, the 43rd and 49th New York, temporarily filled the gap left by the transfer. The attack was made about one P.M., and on its repulse the Vermonters returned to their former position, not having been called upon.

This attack was not pressed home. General Early intrusted it to Gordon with discretionary authority; and that officer, on driving in the opposing skirmishers, found himself confronted by a well-formed and continuous line, strengthened by breast-works to some extent, and wisely gave up the attempt. And thereupon Early abandoned all idea of following up his success further, and ordered the captured artillery and trains sent back. The prisoners taken in the morning had already been hurried to the rear.

Sheridan was now ready to attack, but stayed his hand in consequence of a report that the enemy was advancing a heavy column of infantry on the Front Royal Road towards Winchester. Altogether incredulous as to this alarming report, yet mindful of the threatening message taken from the rebel signal flags, — "Be ready to move as soon as my forces join you, and we will crush Sheridan, James Longstreet, Lieut. Gen'l," — Sheridan deemed it best to ascertain its truth or falsity before launching his army into the vortex of another great fight.

Powell, it will be recollected, was posted before the battle on the Front Royal and Winchester Road, with his Second Brigade holding Lomax in check, and guarding the mouth of the Luray Valley, while Colonel Moore with the First Brigade was posted on his right at Buckton Ford. Warned of the enemy's morning attack by the heavy firing on his right, he held his command in hand awaiting developments. At eight A.M. he received notice from Colonel Moore that he was obliged to fall back to Middletown. At nine A.M., under orders from Torbert to fall back, he slowly retired on the Winchester and Front Royal Road, some five miles to the cross-roads between White Post and Newtown, followed by Lomax at a respectful distance. Thence, by Torbert's orders, he moved across country three miles to Newtown, but was immediately sent back to the cross-roads by that officer on learning of Lomax's appearance. This rebel cavalry leader had been fully acquainted with Early's bold and promising plan of attack, and ordered to throw his force

upon the valley pike in rear of the Union army, and spread havoc and terror there. Although at the head of twenty-five hundred troopers, opposed only by one brigade of horse, and with so much at stake, Lomax spent the entire day in feebly feeling towards Kernstown and Newtown, until at last, satisfied that his side was getting the worst of it, he retreated across Buckton Ford and thence to Front Royal, having inflicted upon his antagonist a loss of one man killed, one wounded, and one taken, — total, three.

Nothing was lost by the delay, for many of Crook's men were collected and joined to their command; and the strength of the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps was augmented by the return of men who had gone to the rear early in the day. Several hundred of the pickets also, who had been cut off by the morning attack, now rejoined their commands. Just before the advance, Colonel Hayes with his little force moved back and across the road, and took post with the rest of Crook's men.

Assured at last that nothing need be apprehended on his left rear, Sheridan, at four P.M., gave the order to attack. He intended a general attack by the whole line, combined with a wheeling and turning movement to the left. The orders, as transmitted to Getty, and doubtless to the other commanders, gave clearly the plan, and directed the advance to commence on the left, Getty's division, which was made the pivot and the directing flank, and to be successively taken up by the commands from left to right. Beginning the attack on the left was clearly a tactical mistake. If the movement had begun on the right the defeat of the enemy would have been even more complete, and without the severe loss on the Union side caused by attacking the strongest part of the enemy's position first, and before the flanking movement could produce its effect.

The Union troops now advanced, and a severe and well contested battle raged between the opposing lines, along the two miles of rolling and partially wooded country covered by them, with varying fortunes at different points, for over an hour,

with the result that the enemy's troops were finally forced back in several places, then broken, and at last gave way and fled in the utmost disorder across the plain to Cedar Creek, pursued by the triumphant Union infantry, shouting and firing in scarce less confusion. So rapidly did they flee that the powerful cavalry on each flank had not time to intercept their flight, and made no captures this side of the creek.

It is impossible to narrate all that occurred on so extended, and in places hidden, a battlefield. Only a succinct account of the part borne by each command in the fight can here be attempted, bearing in mind that the events here related in succession took place simultaneously.


Getty's division, having to begin the attack, sprang to their feet from behind their rude breastworks, dressed their ranks, and moved steadily forward in one thin blue line. They were instantly greeted with a severe fire of shell from the enemy's guns, soon followed by the opening crash of his musketry, but without answering a shot the veterans swept resolutely on. The cavalry on the left of the road also advanced, but were unable to make any impression on the enemy; and it was here that Colonel Charles Russell Lowell met his second and fatal wound.

The Third Brigade on the left, advancing rapidly past the cavalry on its left, came under a terrific flanking fire of artillery on its exposed flank, together with a deadly musketry and artillery in front; the men fell in heaps, and the brigade broke and fell back to the starting point. Simultaneously the Third Division of the Sixth Corps, next on Getty's right, having become somewhat confused in advancing and guiding on the left, and unable to sustain the destructive fire of the enemy secure behind stone walls, also broke and gave back. The 93rd Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, right regiment of Warner's First Brigade of Getty's division, also fell back in confusion with them. But the centre of the division, the staunch Vermont Brigade, and the remainder of Warner's brigade, although

brought to a halt, stood firm, and with the utmost coolness opened so well sustained and effective a hail of musketry upon the gray forms crouching behind the stone walls in front, that their fire visibly slackened. Thus the veterans stubbornly held their ground until the troops on right and left rallied, reformed and advanced again abreast, when the whole division pressed forward, and after a severe struggle drove the enemy from his position in great confusion and pursued him without a pause through Middletown. The Third Brigade gave way because they came within a vortex of fire too deadly for any troops to bear, but the readiness with which they made haste to rally and advance again, spurred on by the generous rivalry which had always existed between them and the Vermont Brigade, proved them no wise inferior to their gallant comrades. As they again rushed forward, the enemy's battery, which had shattered their left, and its infantry support, were seen not over fifty yards from the pike. Portions of the 1st Veteran Maine, and the 43rd New York poured a hot volley upon the battery and the flank of the supports, and they hastily fell back.

The Third Division reformed promptly and advanced a second time, and a severe musketry fight ensued between them and the enemy for three quarters of an hour, while the First Division was holding its ground in advance on their right. At length General Wright in person peremptorily ordered the division to charge. Under cover of a stone wall which extended between and at right angles to the opposing lines, a small force led by Captain H. W. Day of the 106th New York, brigade inspector of the First Brigade, and Lieutenant Colonel M. M. Granger, 122nd Ohio, was thrown on the left of the opposing line, so as to gain a partially enfilade fire, while the division charged, driving the enemy and taking two battle-flags and a considerable number of prisoners.

When the First Division, Sixth Cor  
two lines. The first line was brought  
resistance, but at length both lines cha



the enemy back some distance. Here the First Division was forced to halt in consequence of the repulse of the Third Division, and with its left exposed sustained a severe fire of musketry and artillery for some time, but when the Third Division advanced, they too attacked, and drove the enemy in their front.

During the advance, Colonel Tompkins placed Stevens' 5th Maine Battery of light twelves and Lamb's section of ten-pounder Parrotts in position in rear of Getty's division, and Van Etten's 1st New York Light Battery, and Adams' G Battery, 1st Rhode Island, farther to the right, and all maintained a rapid and effective fire until the enemy gave way.

It does not appear that the Nineteenth Corps artillery participated in the attack, although a section of the 17th Indiana Light Battery and what was left (three guns without caissons) of the 1st Maine Light Battery, were in support.

The Nineteenth Corps, on advancing, met with the same stubborn resistance as the Sixth. The enemy's line overlapped Emory's right, which at the time was not supported by the cavalry, Custer having broken his connection with the infantry and drawn off to the right to attack Rosser. As the Nineteenth Corps pressed forward, the enemy poured a severe fire into the right and rear of the flanking brigade, the Second of the First Division. Colonel McMillan, its commander, promptly wheeled his brigade to the right and above the flanking force. Evans' Brigade of Gordon's Division, which fell back across Cedar Run, then moving to the left he regained his place in line. After a severe struggle the corps drove the enemy from his strong positions and through the woods, and its right emerged upon the high open ground, overlooking the valley of Cedar Creek, and came under the fire of the Sixth Corps artillery for a brief time, until it could be stopped. Sheridan himself cheered on this attack.

The enemy's troops were now everywhere breaking and seeking safety in flight. On pushing through the village of Middletown, the fugitives were seen half way across the plain in con-

fused masses, many running, some turning an instant to fire back and then resuming their flight, but nowhere the semblance of a line or organized body. The Union infantry pursued without waiting to reform, men of different commands all intermixed, shouting and firing, wild with the exhilaration of victory, as far as Cedar Creek and the old camps.

As the troops were driving the enemy in such disorder through Middletown, a prodigious shouting and cheering was heard far to the rear, and a long line of Crook's men could be seen on the left of the pike, advancing over the plain towards the village.

An affecting incident occurred when Getty's divisions were pushing through Middletown. A woman came out of one of the houses fast holding by the arm a tall young Vermont soldier fully equipped, who seemed overjoyed to see his comrades, yet somewhat shamefaced withal. "Here is my guard," cried she, weeping and laughing by turns, in a high state of excitement. "This is my house-guard, I have saved my house-guard, I wouldn't let them take my house-guard. See,—here he is all safe, musket and all." This was the fact. The man had been posted at her house as a guard before the battle, and was caught there when the enemy occupied the village. When they were about to march him off as a prisoner, the woman protested, and made such an outcry that they desisted and left him unmolested, not even disarming him. It was the practice of the Sixth Corps to place guards at the houses along the line of march and in the vicinity of the camps, usually one man at each house, in order to protect the inhabitants from marauders and stragglers, and these guards were respected not only by them, but by the rebel guerrillas and scouting parties also. Indeed, it was understood that Lee, recognizing the benefits of this practice to his people, had forbidden any one to molest them.

Crook's Artillery, Batteries B, 5th Massachusetts, and L, 1st Ohio, under the able direction of Captain H. A. Dupont, Chief of Artillery, taking position on the left of the pike, engaged the

enemy at close quarters until he fell back, and then followed him so closely through Middletown that they were the first guns to reach the creek, and were planted on the height on the right of the road overlooking the stream and the pike winding up Hupp's Hill, now crowded with the retreating columns. From this point they opened an effective and demoralizing fire upon the crowded masses. For a time a Confederate battery manfully replied, firing with great precision and inflicting some casualties. Among others Captain Frank C. Gibbs of the Ohio battery was severely wounded, but the cavalry now charging across the bridge and adjacent fords rapidly dispersed or captured everything in sight.

Merritt's cavalry division advanced on the left of the pike, Lowell's reserve brigade on the right, next the road, Devin's Second Brigade in the centre, and Kidd's First Brigade, in column of regiments, on the left, but were unable to force the enemy from his strong positions behind the walls and inclosures of Middletown. Lowell charged, but was repulsed with considerable loss, and here received his death-wound. Twice the 1st and 6th New York of Devin's brigade, says that officer, charged the town, and each time were compelled to retire under the terrible fire. At length Kidd's brigade forced back the line and a battery in its front, although receiving a deadly fire from infantry in the woods on its left. Passing around the left of the village, the cavalry moved forward to the creek. Detachments of Kidd's and Lowell's brigades pursued those portions of the enemy which fled by the fords below, capturing a battle flag and a number of prisoners. Devin first reached the creek at the bridge. The fugitives were already all across, so hastily they fled, and were forming an infantry line athwart the road on the other side, while Dupont's batteries were vigorously shelling the retreating columns. The 6th New York, gallantly led by Lieutenant Blunt of his staff, dashed across the bridge and charged the half formed line, which fired one volley and broke for the woods on the left. Other regiments crossed at the ford below the bridge, and all pushed up the pike

in pursuit as the shadows of falling night rapidly dropped upon the scene.

On receiving orders that the general advance was about to commence and to be in readiness to participate in it, Custer, who with his division well extended was on Emory's right, closed his lines to the left and began massing his troops on the level plain in rear of the ridge which overlooks Cupp's Ford. At this juncture the mounted skirmishers of the ever-present Rosser were seen advancing over the ridge. Custer promptly drove them back and discovered Rosser in force on the plain next the creek, one and a half miles from Emory's right. Breaking his connection with the Nineteenth Corps, Custer assailed this force with Pierce's battery and three regiments under Colonel Alexander C. F. Pennington, and forced it back upon the stream, where it was supported by the fire of a battery of four guns. "From the ridge where Pierce's battery was posted," says Custer in his report, "I could witness the engagement between our and the enemy's line of battle. It was apparent that the wavering in the ranks of the enemy betokened a retreat, and that this retreat might be converted into a rout. For a moment I was undecided. Upon the right I was confident of my ability to drive the enemy's cavalry, with which I was then engaged, across the creek; upon my left the chances of success were not so sure, but the advantages to be gained, if successful, overwhelmingly greater. I chose the latter. With the exception of three regiments this entire division was wheeled into column and moved to the left at a gallop, Pierce's battery following at a brisk trot. . . . The design was to gain possession of the pike in rear of the enemy, and by holding the bridge and adjacent fords, cut off his retreat."

But the enemy's lines, already broken, were falling back towards the bridge so rapidly that Custer, having the longer distance to traverse, was unable to intercept their flight. Crossing the creek at a ford half a mile above the bridge, he dashed up the hill towards the pike with his two leading regiments, 1st Vermont and 5th New York, charged and scattered an infantry

line which the enemy was striving to form, and without a pause sent the two regiments under Colonel William Wells charging up the pike. At this moment Devin and his men came up from their dashing charge at the bridge and joined in the pursuit at a gallop.

It was now quite dark. The valley pike between the creek and Strasburg, over Hupp's Hill, a distance of two and a half miles, was thronged with the fugitives and the retreating artillery and ambulances hastening away from the disastrous field. The broad, macadamized limestone highway, compacted like a solid rock, resounded and re-echoed under the iron-shod hoofs of the galloping squadrons in the ears of the beaten and flying rebels as though ten thousand Yankee troopers, sword in hand, were thundering down upon their defenceless heads. Dropping their muskets by thousands, abandoning their guns and teams in the road, the terrified fugitives scattered right and left, seeking refuge in the fields and woods, as the charging column with ringing hoof-beats and clashing scabbards, and shout and cheer and carbine shot went thundering past.

"The darkness of the night," says Custer, "was intense, and was only relieved here and there by the light of a burning wagon or ambulance to which the affrighted enemy in his despair had applied the torch. This fact alone, while it disheartened the enemy, increased the ardor and zeal of our troops, who, encouraged by the unparalleled success of their efforts, continued to urge forward their horses at the top of their speed, capturing colors, guns, caissons, wagons, ambulances, and immense numbers of prisoners."

The pursuit never slackened until Fisher's Hill was reached, where a piece of artillery, the last one captured, was secured. Forty-five pieces of artillery, including the twenty-four taken by Early in the morning, hundreds of wagons and ambulances and hundreds of prisoners were the fruits reaped by this dashing and vigorous pursuit.

Yet while giving credit to the brave cavalymen, one cannot

refrain from admitting the part taken by a slight accident, without which the greater part of Early's artillery and trains would probably have escaped.

Half a mile beyond Strasburg the pike crosses a small creek by a wooden bridge only thirty feet long. The left hand or lower side of this bridge was broken down, but over half of it remained intact and afforded ample and safe room for anything on wheels. Some frightened teamster in his haste had driven too near the broken side of the bridge, running the wheels on that side off the sound part, and had left the wagon half upset, hanging on the edge, the lower wheels dangling over the broken planks and the stream. A single, sturdy shove would have thrown it over and cleared the way. But this trifling obstruction, which any man who kept his head could have cleared away in a few minutes, blocked the whole retreating column of guns and trains behind it, by which the road was jammed full for some distance in an almost solid mass.

The First Division, and the Fourth Brigade, Second Division of the Nineteenth Corps, after two hours' rest, were sent forward to Strasburg to aid in securing the immense captures. The other troops returned to their old camps and sought needed rest and food. What alternations of fear and hope, of flight and pursuit, of defeat and victory, had they not felt in the space of a single day! How they talked over the varied scenes and emotions that they had passed through, lamented the loss of comrades tried and true, and exulted over their success. Well had Sheridan fulfilled his confident words: "Men, we'll whip them yet; we'll sleep in our old camps to-night."

But during the long hours of that damp, chilly autumn night, Early's beaten and scattered soldiers, exhausted by twenty-four hours of incessant marching and fighting, half famished, with hopes and spirits crushed by their overwhelming defeat, were wandering singly or in squads, seeking safety by flight, in the darkness, through woods and fields. Many crossing the river took to the mountains; many avoiding the pike, fled up the

valley, picking their way across country, and many sank exhausted and despairing on the ground, gladly surrendering to the Union pickets on the morrow when daylight revealed their lurking places. The next morning the roadsides from Cedar Creek to Strasburg were simply lined with muskets flung away by the flying troops. The beaten enemy continued his flight, without semblance of order or formation, twenty-five miles to New-market, where, as Major Jed. Hotchkiss says, the men in some degree "sorted themselves." A small cavalry force remained over night at Fisher's Hill, but fell back on the approach of Merritt's division the next morning.

Early's loss was, killed and wounded (about)	2250
Prisoners . . . . .	1250
	<u>3500</u>

Twenty-four guns, fourteen battle-flags, fifty-six ambulances, were captured, and many wagons and ambulances were destroyed by the cavalry.

General Ramseur was mortally wounded and captured, and died the next morning, and General Culler A. Battle was wounded.

The Union loss all told amounted to

Killed . . . . .	644
Wounded . . . . .	3430
Captured . . . . .	1591
	<u>5665</u>

Of the Sixth Corps, General D. D. Bidwell was killed; Generals Wright and Ricketts and Colonels Penrose, Hamblin, and R. S. McKenzie, commanding brigades, were wounded. Colonel Thoburn commanding First Division, Crook's corps, was killed; and Colonel Kitching was mortally wounded. Colonel Charles Russell Lowell was mortally wounded. General Cuvier Grover, commanding Second Division, Nineteenth Corps, was wounded.

The table of casualties in this battle, as in all others, throws much light upon the part borne by the several commands.

As was to be expected from the surprise of the attack, Crook's corps, including Kitching's force, lost mostly in pris-

oners, having five hundred and fifty-eight officers and men taken, four hundred and two killed or wounded ; total, nine hundred and sixty.

Three-fifths of the prisoners were captured on the picket-line largely in consequence of their own lack of vigilance.

The Nineteenth Corps lost even more prisoners, seven hundred and ninety, while the killed and wounded amounted to sixteen hundred and ninety-three ; total loss, twenty-three hundred and eighty-three. The losses in killed and wounded were heaviest in the First Division, although only half as large as the second in numbers ; but the latter lost twice as many prisoners as the former. The Second Division, it will be remembered, held the left of the Nineteenth Corps position on the pike, and were assailed by Kershaw in flank, Wharton in front and Gordon in rear, almost simultaneously.

The Sixth Corps lost only two hundred prisoners, half of whom were taken on picket, an entire company of the 2d Connecticut Heavy Artillery being surrounded and captured by Rosser without fault of its commander. It lost in killed and wounded, nineteen hundred and twenty-six. Getty's division suffered the heaviest, six hundred and seventy-seven ; the First Division, four hundred and seventy ; the Third, six hundred and sixty. Getty's division met with its greatest loss in carrying the enemy's strong position at Middletown in the afternoon. But taking the fighting of the entire day, it undoubtedly inflicted a heavier loss upon the enemy than it suffered. The next day, according to the report of the division ordnance commander, Captain Gifford, nine hundred and one muskets were gathered up from the ground fought over by the division, of which four hundred and sixty-one were Enfield muskets, — an arm peculiar to the Confederate infantry.

Considering the really important part borne by the cavalry in this battle, and the claims often advanced that the cavalry saved the army and the day, one is astonished to learn that the entire loss of the three divisions aggregated only one hundred

and ninety-six, of which twenty-nine were killed, one hundred and twenty-four wounded and forty-three captured. Getty's single division suffered about four times the loss of the entire cavalry.

Even Custer himself, after confronting the rebel infantry all the morning, first on the right and then on the left, after in the afternoon twice attacking and then driving back Rosser after his dashing and successful charge and pursuit on the pike, which resulted in such enormous captures, lost just two men killed, one officer and twenty-three men wounded, and eight men captured; total thirty-four; while Powell's Second Division lost only ten men all told, seven of whom belonged to Moore's brigade, which first held the pike in rear of Middletown.

The hardest fighting by the cavalry was done by Merritt's First Division, in rear of Middletown, on Getty's left. Here Lowell, nobly aided by Devin, held the rebel infantry at bay for hours, lining the stone walls with his dismounted troopers, and repeatedly though fruitlessly charging the enemy at the head of his mounted squadrons, until he was twice wounded and died gloriously *pro patria*, the most distinguished and the most lamented of all the brave men who fell on that field. Merritt's loss was one hundred and forty-nine, of which Kidd's First Brigade lost eighty-eight, Devin, Second Brigade, twenty-four, and Lowell, Reserve Brigade, thirty-seven.

With this exception it may be said that Cedar Creek was a great infantry fight at which the cavalry assisted by their presence.

Few battles afford a more striking instance of the great moral effect that can be produced by a powerful cavalry when skilfully manoeuvred without being heavily engaged, and that the cavalry was handled with great judgment and skill on this occasion is undeniable.

When Gordon swept everything before him from flank to flank of the Union positions, and stood triumphant on the right, it was the sight of the cavalry forming across the country on

his left front, with the infantry rallying behind their lines, that deterred him from instantly following up his success and made him delay further advance until he could reform his troops, disordered by their long and successful charge. What timely and effective aid the cavalry rendered in encouraging the broken infantry to reform, and in actually stopping hundreds of fugitives and driving them back to their colors! To have hurled the cavalry directly upon Early's veteran and victorious infantry would have been simply folly. General Wright evinced sound judgment in throwing all the cavalry on the left to secure the pike, for that was a vital point, and the most exposed. And what could be finer than the way Lowell and Devin held the highway at Middletown on Getty's left! Undoubtedly it was their resolute and aggressive attitude and the sight of Getty's infantry and their Sixth Corps crosses which had just repulsed three of his divisions so roughly that deterred Early from boldly advancing down the pike. He had ample forces in hand, the three divisions of Pegram, Ramseur and Wharton, and a brigade of Kershaw. The cavalry could not have withstood their onset, and then Getty, flanked on his left, would have been forced back and his fine division probably badly crippled. All the Union forces would have gone tumbling back to Winchester, and Early would have reaped all the spoils and prestige of a great victory.

For several hours fortune thus tempted Early, but he failed to seize the opportunity, and with Sheridan's arrival it vanished.

Dread of the Union cavalry paralyzed both Rosser and Lomax. Colonel Wells, with three regiments, held the former at bay all the morning, and the latter did not even make an effort worthy of the name. The enemy's cavalry was so completely cowed by their whipping at Tom's Brook that it has been well said that the fruits of that brilliant fight were reaped at Cedar Creek.

The disposition of a division of horse on each flank for the

final attack, showed Sheridan's accustomed skill, and it was not their fault that when the enemy gave way he fled so rapidly that they could not flesh their sabres nor intercept his flight. Yet it should be remarked that Merritt could make no impression on the enemy until the universal rout occurred, and that Custer, drawing off to the right to fight Rosser, left Emory's right unsupported and outflanked by the enemy's infantry lines, and only the prompt change of front by his right brigade and its vigorous attack on the enemy's flanking force prevented disaster at that point.

The plain fact is that the enemy's infantry in a hard, stand-up fight of an hour, in which they had the advantage of numbers, superior artillery and position, were beaten by the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps and driven in confusion which rapidly degenerated into rout. The knowledge that the powerful Union cavalry might cut them off, and perhaps the sight by some of the broken line on the left, of Custer's column galloping swiftly across their left rear, undoubtedly hastened their flight.

If the general fight had commenced from the right, instead of the left, it is hard to see how the bulk of Early's army could have escaped capture. Yet the fact that Sheridan ordered it the other way is enough to make one consider well before he ventures the criticism. Doubtless he designed to fully engage and occupy the enemy all along his line, in order that the turning movement might be the more unexpected, irremediable and decisive. If the rebel infantry had clung to their position only twenty minutes longer, they must nearly all have been captured.

The astonishing success of Early's morning attack was fairly earned by the boldness of the plan and the remarkable skill, precision and vigor with which his brave troops executed it. It was a fine illustration of the maxim that in war the boldest often succeeds the best. Yet it could not have succeeded had not the way been opened by the inexcusable care-

lessness and mistakes of his opponents. And first, Crook's picket line, instead of being pushed out in front of Cedar Creek a mile at least from his camps, was posted along the stream less than half that distance in front of them. Second, the fact that the greater portion of the pickets was captured in the first rush of Kershaw's Division, proves that they were unprepared even to retreat, far less to resist. The day after the battle, Getty's division occupied an advanced post at Strasburg, and many fugitives were picked up as his pickets were thrown out. Some of these belonged to Kershaw's Division, and stated that when they advanced in the morning attack they found the picket reserves fast asleep in rail pens, and captured them all without firing a shot. They probably supposed, from the report brought in by the reconnoissance the day before the battle, that the enemy was miles away retreating up the valley, and this, while it cannot excuse such negligence, helps to account for it. On the other hand, officers of Crook's command claim that the alarm was given by the pickets a good half hour before the attack. It is probable enough that some of the outposts in a long extended picket line observed and reported the presence of the enemy, but if so the reports not being verified by the picket reserves were treated as mere alarms. Certainly, had the pickets been properly posted and duly vigilant, Kershaw could not have formed his lines close to the creek, without their knowledge, nor crossed the stream without such resistance offered by the reserve lining the banks as would have loudly notified all of the attack in ample time to prepare to meet it.

Third, the fords across the North Fork on the left, just below the mouth of Cedar Creek, should have been strongly held by the cavalry, and an advance post or picket thrown out to occupy the roads and railroad on the opposite bank, between the river and the mountain, which gave direct communication between Strasburg and Front Royal. Instead of which, Moore's cavalry brigade was posted two miles below at Buckton Ford,

and only a few videttes watched the fords above and connected with the infantry pickets. In fact, Wright was unduly apprehensive as to his right, and regarding the river and mountain as a protection on his left, never thought that they might be a cover to the enemy's attack. Early's plan was hardly apprehensible. Wright, an able and approved soldier, showed more than usual vigilance in ordering the reconnoissance at daylight on both flanks.

There was no circumstance to which Early was more indebted for the overwhelming success of his attacks than the early morning fog, which, overspreading the entire field, rendered it impossible for the Union troops to discern the attacking columns until they were directly upon them, or to distinguish friend from foe at any distance, to know the positions or fate of the next commands, or even to see to guard their flanks until too late. In a word, it made confusion worse confounded, while the enemy, knowing thoroughly the ground and the Union positions, carrying out a well-studied plan, and taking the aggressive, were free from such perplexities. Had the morning been clear, in all probability the Sixth Corps would have repelled the attack at Meadow Run and enabled the Nineteenth Corps to reform there, and then the two corps would have advanced, and in a fair, stand-up fight on the open plain along the pike, would have driven the enemy across Cedar Creek, fortunate indeed if the powerful Union horse had not cut off his retreat to Strasburg, and forced him, with the loss of all his artillery and ambulances, to take refuge in the Massanutten Range. This would have surely been the result if the left had not been so completely and culpably surprised, and by this fact the real temerity of Early's move can be seen. It was, in fact, one of those desperate attempts, which nothing but dire necessity can justify, and nothing but success can prevent from being condemned. Yet Early's situation fully justified the attempt. The morning's battle was a most remarkable and glorious achievement, and would have caused him and his army to live long in story and

in song, had it not been overshadowed by the afternoon's reverse. How he failed to perfect and secure his victory by resolutely advancing down the pike beyond Middletown, has already been described. Well for him had he pressed his attack with the same audacity with which he commenced it. Early's critics, friend and foe alike, loudly condemn his inaction at this critical point, now that they all see the situation clearly enough. But things appeared very differently to the Confederate commander in the skirts of Middletown, as amidst the fog and smoke he saw his reserve division driven back, and received the report of Wharton, its commander, that his troops were repulsed and the Sixth Corps advancing. Early supposed that the whole Sixth Corps, and not merely a single division, confronted him on the ridge. He did not know the full success of his flanking columns, that not only the Eighth and Nineteenth Corps, but two divisions of the Sixth, were driven far to the right and rear, and put *hors du combat* for the time. Under these circumstances, with such light as he had, Early acted the part of a prudent and skilful general; acted as nine good generals out of ten, standing in his shoes, would have done. He only lacked the intuitive judgment or inspiration of genius. And next to his own failure to advance, his greatest misfortune was the arrival of Sheridan on the battle-field, but for which he would have saved all that he had gained, at least.

Sheridan it was, and Sheridan alone, who restored the confidence and morale of his army at a bound, ranged the disjointed commands in united battle order, inspired them with the determination to win and confidence of success, and hurled them on the foe with such vigor and skill, that the more he resisted, the worse was bound to be his defeat.

And it was Getty, whose prompt, sound judgment in seizing the ridge, and steadfast courage and tenacity in holding it, arrested the enemy's victorious onslaught and paralyzed the judgment and energy of the Confederate commander. It was Getty who, for hours unsupported save by the cavalry on his

left, unflinchingly maintained the line which alone made it possible for Sheridan to retrieve the day.

One of Sheridan's first despatches to Grant after the battle contained the following request : " General, I want Getty of the Sixth Corps, and the brave boys, Merritt and Custer, promoted by brevet ; " and in his report and memoirs he has always acknowledged Getty's services on that day.

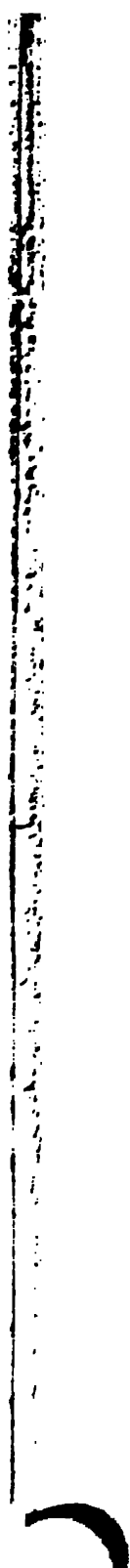
Early has endeavored to cast the blame for his own failure upon his troops, alleging that they stopped and scattered to plunder the Union camps ; and his aspersions have been repeated in most accounts of the battle. This charge can only apply to Kershaw's and Gordon's Divisions, for Ramseur and Pegram struck far in rear of the camps, and there encountered Wheaton's division, First of Sixth Corps, which they drove back, and Getty's division, by which they were in turn repulsed ; and Wharton's Division, after crossing the creek, moved directly by the pike to Middletown and attacked Getty on the ridge, and was also thrown off. These troops, and Wofford's Brigade of Kershaw's Division besides, which had become separated and did not join his other brigades in sweeping down Emory's works, had not suffered much, and were in good order and perfectly available for any movement. And although Gordon's and Kershaw's troops were necessarily exhausted and scattered after charging the entire length of the Union camps, — a good two miles, — and overcoming no little resistance, it took that officer only an hour to collect and reform his men, advance again, and flank Getty out of his position on the ridge. General B. W. Crowninshield, 2d Massachusetts Cavalry, Sheridan's provost marshal, witnessed this advance, and speaks with praise of the admirable order and steadiness of the enemy's troops. It is evident that there was no serious delay, straggling, nor demoralization among them, even admitting that they picked up the shelter-tents, blankets, and clothing abandoned by Crook's and Emory's men, and stripped the dead. None of the other Confederate officers make the same accusation, and several indignantly deny

it. Wherefore it may be dismissed as grossly exaggerated, equally unjust to those brave and tried soldiers, and discreditable to the beaten general who uttered it to excuse himself. Somewhat to the surprise of most of his officers, Sheridan took no steps to fix upon any one the blame of the reverse of the morning. He was satisfied with the result, and remarked that "the accident of the morning turned to our advantage as much as though the whole movement had been planned."

"This battle," he said in his report, "practically ended the campaign in the Shenandoah Valley. When it opened it found our enemy boastful and confident, unwilling to acknowledge that the soldiers of the Union were his equals in courage and manliness; when it closed with Cedar Creek, this impression had been removed from his mind, and gave place to good sense and a strong desire to quit fighting. The very best troops of the Confederacy had not only been defeated, but had been routed in successive engagements until their spirit and *esprit* were destroyed."

## THE CAPTURE OF JACKSON





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BY

LIEUTENANT SETH A. RANLETT, U.S.V.

THE movement upon Jackson may be said to have begun simultaneously with the surrender of Vicksburg. During the investment and siege of this stronghold, a large force of Confederates under General Joseph E. Johnston, who was one of their ablest generals, was threatening to fall upon the besieging army, and, assisted by a vigorous sortie of General Pemberton's forces, unite their commands and rescue the latter.

Such a movement was, in fact, planned for the seventh of July, and by scouts word was sent to General Pemberton on the night of the 3d, to co-operate with Johnston's attack, but too late, for negotiations were then in progress for the surrender, and on the 5th, upon hearing of the surrender, instead of crossing the Big Black River to attack us, Johnston issued his orders to retreat upon Jackson, and made his dispositions to defend the Capital.

General Grant, with his customary foresight, had, some days prior to the surrender, matured his plans to turn upon Johnston and drive him from the State.

For this purpose, he had appointed General Sherman to lead the expeditionary force, which was to consist of his own corps, the Fifteenth, General Ord's Thirteenth Corps and the Ninth Corps under General Parke, to which was temporarily assigned General Smith's division of the Sixteenth Corps. In General Grant's Official Report of the Vicksburg Campaign he says :

" Johnston, however, not attacking, I determined to attack him the moment Vicksburg was in our possession, and accordingly notified Sherman that I should

again make an assault upon Vicksburg at daylight on the 6th, and for him to have up supplies of all descriptions ready to move upon receipt of orders, if the assault should prove a success. His preparations were immediately made, and when the place surrendered on the 4th, two days earlier than I had fixed for the attack, Sherman was ready and moved at once," etc.

After the battle of Fredericksburg, when General Burnside resigned command of the Army of the Potomac and took command of the Department of the Ohio, he asked permission to take his own corps, the Ninth, with him.

Two divisions of the corps, the First and Second, went west, the Third remaining in Virginia. Four Massachusetts Regiments, the 21st, 29th, 35th and 36th went with the corps to Kentucky, but only the three latter to Vicksburg, the 21st remaining in Kentucky during that summer, so fateful to the corps. And thus our two divisions, largely composed of Eastern and New England men, found themselves a part of the Army of the Tennessee, men who were known to fame as the veterans of Shiloh, Donelson and other western battles. They were disposed to look upon us with somewhat of contempt, and there was little cordiality of feeling for us at first; under their high slouch hats they laughed at our jaunty McClellan caps. In set-up and soldierly appearance our men were greatly their superiors, and to us there was little difference in their looks, save in the color of the dress, from the Confederates. They felt annoyed, too, to think that we had been summoned from the east to help them out of what looked like a bad scrape. Many of our regiments had been in the war from the very first and bore on their flags the names of most of the eastern battles from Bull Run to Fredericksburg, and they were not men to put up with any patronizing. But these strained relations all disappeared after the Jackson affair, and we returned north with their good opinion and soldierly friendship and the highest encomiums of their officers.

About 10 A.M. of the 4th of July, while we were rejoicing over the surrender of the great stronghold, with its thirty thou-

sand prisoners, orders came for us to move at once in light marching order, without tents or baggage, on the road to the Big Black River. The "general" call was sounded and I rode out and called in a picket of our regiment, which was picketing a road leading eastward through the woods; a very uncanny place it was, too, in the night. The remainder of our brigade, which had been stationed at Oak Ridge, marched without waiting for us, and so rapidly that we could not overtake them until the next day. Ours was the First Brigade, First Division, consisting of the 7th and 27th Michigan, 45th Pennsylvania and 36th Massachusetts. It was commanded by Colonel Henry Bowman of the 36th and his assistant adjutant general was Major William H. Hodgkins. Major E. T. Raymond was his inspector general. The 36th was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John B. Norton of Charlestown, who had been a captain in the 5th Massachusetts at Bull Run, a brave and popular officer. The division was commanded by Brigadier General Thomas Welsh, a former colonel of the 45th Pennsylvania. He died at Cincinnati just after our Mississippi campaign of disease contracted therein.

There were few, if any, better regiments in the service than the 45th Pennsylvania, and between it and ours there always existed the warmest regard and even affection, as peril after peril shared together produced such a bond as only soldiers know. We were brigaded together from the beginning to the end of our service. They welcomed us as comrades in the mountains of Maryland in September, '62—veterans then themselves of long service, and escorted the regiment to the boat in Alexandria in June, '65 when it left for home, their term as re-enlisted veterans still incomplete. These few words may perhaps appear hardly germane to the subject, but they may make matters to be spoken of later, better understood.

The movement upon Jackson was, therefore, soon in full progress. Three full army corps, with plenty of artillery, some cavalry, and with General Sherman in command had taken

the field, unencumbered with any baggage, in the hottest month of the year, and the hottest rebel state.

The army moved in three columns directly east to the Big Black River, the Ninth Corps taking the roads north of the railroad, the Fifteenth Corps, the centre, by the nearest roads to Messenger's Ford, and the Thirteenth along the line of the railroad, all within supporting distance.

The country over which our column marched was not ill-adapted to military movements, being comparatively level and not swampy except near the river. We passed over some very large and thrifty-looking plantations, through corn-fields of vast extent and most luxuriant growth. Standing in my stirrups and reaching up with my sword I could not touch the tops of the stalks. This afforded us plenty of fodder for our animals, and for lack of other food, we found it meant roast-corn for our own breakfast, dinner and supper. It was an agreeable change from a hard-tack diet. All suffered much for water; the intense heat and dust naturally created an intolerable thirst, and the only way to allay it was to chew the leaves of the trees. As the Confederates retreated they polluted the water, leaving dead animals in the creeks and ponds and even throwing kerosene and filth into wells and cisterns. Only those whose lips have cracked and tongues swollen with thirst know what it means to suffer for water.

Upon reaching the Big Black River at Birdsong's Ferry on the 6th, our brigade was detailed to build a bridge. At this point the river was not very wide or deep, but the steep banks made it difficult to approach. Parties scattered in all directions and returned with timber and boards from farm buildings and fence rails. These were floated out and bound together with withes in such a way that a floating bridge was constructed strong enough to bear men and horses passing a few at a time. We worked all day and night of the 6th and until noon of the 7th on this bridge. The First Division had passed over it safely, and two brigades of the Second Division, when, as

Durrell's Battery was crossing, the bridge suddenly broke and was swept away, cutting off Colonel Griffin's brigade, General Smith's division and most of the artillery. This was sent round to Messenger's Crossing and by means of rafts and a ferry-boat found sunk in the river and raised, the infantry was ferried over during the afternoon and night of the 7th. This accident greatly delayed the movement of the corps, which was forced to halt till the afternoon of the 8th for the delayed troops and artillery. The day we crossed the river the heat was something fearful and many of the men were overcome by it. Late in the afternoon there came up one of those thunder showers for which the Black River valley is famous. The lightning was appalling; the rain fell in torrents and the roads soon became little better than a quagmire. No orders came to halt and the troops plodded on as best they could. Some of the artillery became mired and badly hindered the movement of the infantry. Darkness came on and the storm continued, showing no signs of holding up. Finally, Colonel Norton's horse and my own became terrified and unmanageable, and we were forced to dismount and lead them, their plunging making it dangerous for the men around us. It was at this time that Quartermaster Hawes of the 35th Massachusetts was killed by a falling limb, and about nine o'clock in the evening Major Robert Parrett of the 100th Indiana in General Smith's division was also killed by a falling tree. It was a fearful night, and though our corps in its campaigning over six states saw some pretty tough times, no one has ever questioned the fact that that night "took the cake." At length the order came to go into bivouac, and our brigade marched into an old cotton-field, ankle-deep in mud, and stacked arms.

After much hard work some fires were started, and then followed a dipper of hot coffee, a good soldierly growl, a pipe, and — sleep. Many graphic incidents of this march upon Jackson are and will ever be in my memory, and alone would make a lengthy story, but I must pass them over and come to the event to which they all led.

Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, is situated on the west or right bank of the Pearl River, forty miles east of Vicksburg : an important junction of railroads from north to south and east to west. It is pleasantly situated in an undulating country, a commanding site, overlooking the adjacent territory. In addition to the State House there were the Insane Asylum, Deaf and Dumb Asylum, City Hall, and many fine private residences. It was not only a commercial, but a manufacturing centre, with car-shops, cotton warehouses and factories. Its loss would mean the loss of Mississippi to the Confederates, to say nothing of the moral effect, and it was expected that it would be desperately defended. During the siege of Vicksburg, and in anticipation of its fall, the capital had been fortified by a line of rifle-pits and forts on the three sides, north, west and south, the Pearl River covering the east side. This fortified line extended around the city about a mile distant from it, not far enough out really as a protection against artillery. At several points of the line forts had been constructed by skilful engineers and embrasured for many guns, and these were manned with heavy artillery, some pieces as large as 64 pound rifled siege-guns. I bear in memory one of these guns that gave us no rest : even when in reserve its missiles found us, and it required constant watching. Their rifle-pits were so planned as to take advantage of every slight elevation, zig-zagged so as to command every approach, and trees and bushes had been cut away in front and slashed, making a natural and almost impenetrable abatis.

Within these defences were four strong divisions of infantry, cavalry and artillery, all veterans, under Generals Loring, French, Walker, and Breckenridge, numbering, according to an official report of June 25th, 31,226 officers and men ; with ample field and siege artillery. Included in this number was the cavalry division of thirty-six hundred under General Jackson, operating in the field outside the city. It largely outnumbered the cavalry with General Sherman, and compelled him to

detach infantry to meet threatened attacks upon trains coming from the rear with ammunition and supplies. Our entire force, according to an official report of June 30th, numbered 48,935 officers and men: not much superior to Johnston's, considering that his forces fought behind powerful intrenchments.

Our cavalry numbered only twenty-six hundred and was under command of Colonel Cyrus Bussey of the 3d Iowa Cavalry.

For six days the army pushed steadily forward, necessarily with caution, and ready at any moment to form line of battle; having an enemy in front who might be heavily re-enforced by troops from General Lee or Bragg; an enemy, too, of veterans led by an able general, who would gladly lead us into a trap if possible.

We were short, also, of ammunition, the trains being far behind and a battle and check might have been serious. But we all had great faith in Uncle Billy, or "Old Tecump" as some of the Western men called him. On we tramped, over the burning roads and in the intolerable dust, or perhaps through shady bottom lands among great trees hung with Spanish moss, and then across cotton or corn fields, an object of never ending interest to the plantation blacks who thronged the road-side and knew that liberty followed our flags; greeting Massa Linkum's sogers with "hallelujahs" and antics of joy, both ludicrous and pathetic at the same time.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of July 10th when the Ninth Corps, the First Brigade, First Division leading, débouched from the woods into the open country in sight of the Capital. In all my experience I cannot recall a more glorious sight than we looked upon then and there. An open valley stretched away to our front, through which from north to south ran the Jackson and Northern Railroad. Far away beyond the distant slopes, covered with suburban residences, clumps of woods, corn-fields and gardens, we saw the city of Jackson. Down the valley to our right, their muskets flashing in the light of the westering sun, and colors waving in

the breeze, our comrades of the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Corps were deploying into line of battle, while in our and their front, the active forms of the skirmishers, covering the entire battle line, were pushing ahead and feeling for the enemy. Our line was quickly formed and advanced, the First Brigade on the right of the division, the 45th Pennsylvania skirmishing on our front, the 36th Massachusetts holding the extreme right of the division.

Continuing our line to the left was the Third Brigade, the 2d, 8th and 20th Michigan, 79th New York and 100th Pennsylvania. The First, Second and Third Brigades of the Second Division, commanded respectively by Colonel Simon G. Griffin, Brigadier General Edward Ferrero, and Colonel B. C. Christ, followed in our support.

As we moved forward we established connection with Colonel Hick's brigade of General Smith's division, the 46th Ohio being on our immediate right, and along the front of this division was the 6th Iowa, Colonel John M. Corse's regiment, deployed as skirmishers, and commanded by Colonel Corse in person.

As our line advanced down the slope and cleared the way, the artillery came out of the woods and went into battery on the crest of the ridge in our rear. Directly in rear of the First Brigade we could see Lieutenant Benjamin executing the movement of "action front" with his big 20 pounder rifled Parrotts, those pets of the corps, Battery E of the 2d U. S. Artillery, whose guns had thundered at Antietam and many other eastern fields. All at once as we continued our advance and reached the railroad the great guns opened, and over our heads the shells went screaming into and beyond the wooded crest upon which we were moving and from which we expected to receive a heavy fire. But much to our surprise, General Johnston had chosen not to risk a battle in the open, and was falling back into his intrenchments. The skirmishers were sufficient for the work and drove back the Confederates so fast that the main line could hardly keep up with them. The centre was held back and

the two wings advanced, the line becoming a semi-circle, so as to rest upon the river above and below the city and completely invest its northern, western and southern sides: this, however, was not fully accomplished until the 13th.

As we steadily advanced, crossing the railroad and the two county roads called the Livingston and Canton Roads, our regiment came up squarely against the State Lunatic Asylum, a large white marble building. The keepers had fled at our approach, needlessly, locking the wretched inmates in their cells. The firing of the skirmishers under their very windows, the booming of cannon, and unwonted spectacle of war, had wrought the poor wretches up to a pitiable state of excitement. As we passed under the windows, the screams and curses were horrible to listen to, and added a new terror to the day. Guards were at once placed upon the building to keep out all intruders, and during the battle which raged for a week in sight of the Asylum, no harm came to the patients.

It was growing late and the lines, somewhat broken by our rapid advance, were halted, supports closed up, alignments rectified, a strong picket and reserve thrown out and operations ended for the day.

Coffee was brought up by the company cooks and the men were soon lying down in line of battle with loaded muskets by their sides, ready to fall in at any moment to the long roll of the drums, and sleeping to the music of the sharp and constant firing of the pickets.

At the first sign of daylight on the 11th the men were aroused and the advance movement continued.

General Parke was ordered to move up as close as possible to the enemy, without assaulting their works or bringing on a general engagement, which it seemed General Sherman did not desire. This was very quickly done. In very little more time than it takes to write it, our division, in the same order as the day before, with General Smith's division on the right, without firing a shot except from our skirmishers, advanced directly to

the front, driving a strong line of Confederates behind their earthworks, and halted on a wooded ridge about two hundred yards from their line. Here we received a heavy fire from their artillery and sharpshooters, but lying low their fire mostly passed over and did us little damage. Here we continued to lie through this entire day. Some of our men are lying there still, where we buried them that night.

In General Sherman's Official Report he says, — "It was no part of the plan to assault the enemy's works, so that the main bodies of infantry were kept well in reserve under cover, whilst the skirmishers were pushed forward as close as possible, leading to many brisk skirmishes, which usually resulted in the enemy taking refuge within his works."

I think there was no other engagement during the war of the length of duration and forces engaged, so well entitled as this one to be called: "The Battle of the Skirmishers."

Being wholly ignorant as we were of the general's plans and supposing the object of our movement was to capture or defeat Johnston's command, having our enemy on the run and the *esprit-du-corps* of the army being at its very best, it was matter of wonder to us why we were held back just as we had brought our foe to a stand. There was some pretty emphatic talk among us as we lay there idle through that trying day, a passive target for their artillery and marksmen. It was hinted that General Sherman, sharing the prejudice of the western troops, did not dare or care to trust our corps to attack in earnest, even fearing our possible success.

The ease with which we had forced them back into their works led us to believe that a vigorous assault, well supported, would have carried them and so saved us a week of severe fighting, constructing of field works, rifle-pits and approaches to their line. Probably we were wrong in our suspicions, as it appeared later that General Sherman hoped to hold Johnston there until he had destroyed the railroads north and south, then gradually to work around his flank and rear, and so force a surrender.

These very tactics he used the next year in the Atlanta campaign, against General Johnston. The enemy's superiority in cavalry would have made it very difficult, if not impossible, to cross the Pearl River, and so extend our lines, which were none too strong as it was. On the contrary, there were some pretty weak points in it and General Sherman, soon realizing this fact, sent back for more troops. General McArthur's division of McPherson's corps came forward, two brigades arriving at Jackson the 14th, and one brigade halting at Champion's Hill, ready to come if needed. The line we were holding could not have been less than five miles long, and it is my candid opinion that it was very fortunate for General Sherman's fame that there was no Stonewall Jackson with his old division in our front.

About 10 o'clock A.M. it was found necessary to re-enforce our skirmish line, the 45th Pennsylvania having been on duty many hours and hard pushed. Companies A and F of the 36th under command of Captain William F. Draper of Company F, were ordered out. Captain Draper was informed that the line with which he was to connect was about one hundred yards in advance. He deployed his men and advanced rapidly in the face of a severe fire, until he found himself confronting the main line of the enemy. There were no signs of our skirmishers to right or left, and satisfied that there must be some misunderstanding of the enemy's position he withdrew his men to a point midway between the hostile lines, but not until he had suffered a loss of two killed and seven wounded (one mortally) of his own company.

It must be remembered that at this time the enemy's line was but partly developed, the ground was very uneven, cut up by ravines, dense undergrowth, here and there an opening, but very blind country: much worse in our front than to the west or south. Both the adjutants of the 79th New York and 7th Rhode Island went through the lines by mistake and were captured.

At the same time that Captain Draper advanced, Colonel Norton, finding that we were without any troops on our right flank, sent me to see if I could find any, as the firing in that direction seemed heavy.

The ground just here was very much broken, a ravine running off to the right and a tangled undergrowth masking everything in that direction. I had gone but a short distance when I struck the skirmishers of Colonel Hicks' brigade almost parallel with our main line, and this was the line which Captain Draper had gone out far in advance to find. They were in a growth of young scrub oak about breast high and had evidently attracted the especial attention of the enemy, for the firing on both sides was red hot. I found an officer in command and told him our skirmishers had just gone out far to the front, expecting to connect with him. He said he could not advance another foot: two of his men had just fallen (I saw them lying there), the fire being from the enemy's sharpshooters and very close and deadly.

I returned to our line and shortly afterwards our own skirmishers were forced to fall back, as above stated. I have sometimes thought that those jack-oak bushes in that intensely hot July sun, with the whistling bullets and roar of battle on all sides, was about as near an approach to a material hell as I ever care to get.

Sometime during the morning, Lieutenant Benjamin came up and studied the ground where we lay to see if there was any room to place his guns. For a short distance in our front there was a little clearing, but it was commanded and swept by a most deadly fire of sharpshooters posted in trees in the enemy's line. It would have been death to every horse in his battery to have attempted to haul his guns out there, and a useless sacrifice. He finally placed them on a ridge about one hundred yards directly in rear of us and opened fire over our line, the big shells tearing through the trees, lopping off limbs that fell among us and made things very uncomfortable. Some of his

shot were so low that we began to question which of our fronts was most dangerous, and finally Colonel Norton sent me with his compliments to the lieutenant, and "would he be kind enough to elevate his guns a little?" "He would with pleasure" — but as by that time he had shot away the tops of most of the trees, he had cleared a path for his shells and they gave us little more trouble.

So the day wore on and about 4 o'clock in the afternoon Captain Draper was relieved by the 17th Michigan Regiment. They had hardly taken their position than they were handsomely charged by the Confederates. Companies E and K of the 36th under Captain Warriner re-enforced the 17th and the enemy was repulsed. Just before dark a heavy thunder shower came up. As if in fear that we might improve the opportunity of the rain to make a general assault, the enemy opened with all their artillery, to which ours promptly replied. The roar of heaven's artillery, the torrents of rain, the crash of grape through the trees and the bursting shells combined with the sharp rattle of musketry to make such a scene as even a battle rarely presents. About 9 o'clock that evening, Captain Warriner sent back for ammunition. The lines were very close together and the firing was constant. I took a box half full, about five hundred rounds, which was as much as I could carry, and started out for the picket line. It was intensely dark, the trees and bushes dripping wet, and the only way to find the line was to watch for the flash of the rifles. Floundering around with my load of nearly fifty pounds, stopping from time to time to rest and take my bearings, by good luck I at length came right upon the reserve of the picket. There were some negro cabins about midway between the hostile lines and both sides were disputing their possession. The "Johnnies" would make a rush and hold them a while and then our boys would rally and clean them out. From the noise made that night it would not surprise me at any time to hear that a placer lead mine had been discovered in that region. As the

place was not especially conducive to health and long life I did not remain a great while to see the fun, but groped my way back to the main line.

During this day there was some very sharp fighting on our left by the Third Brigade of our division, commanded by Colonel Daniel Leasure of the 100th Pennsylvania.

As their line advanced with ours in the morning the 2d Michigan was deployed as skirmishers and flankers to the front and left. The brigade advanced until with us, it drew the fire of the enemy's artillery and then halted, as ordered. But the brave men from Michigan did not halt, but dashed forward, drove the enemy into their rifle-pits, out of them, and back into their main line, which also fell back into their works. They then looked around for their supports and found they had none. The fighting had been most desperate, hand to hand, and some of the men had fallen close up to the enemy's works. There was nothing to do but get out of the scrape, and they did so under a terrible fire, with the loss of fifty-nine killed, wounded and missing out of less than two hundred engaged.

Colonel Leasure says in his official Report: "At the very moment when the gallant 2d Michigan Regiment was entering the enemy's lines, I received an order to halt where I was, as General Sherman said we had already advanced farther than he intended we should at that time—as the right of the investing army had not yet got sufficiently forward. I had no doubt then, nor have I now, that if that order had not arrived at that moment, in twenty minutes the First Division would have been in the city, or at least held the heights that command it."

It would be interesting to quote Colonel Corse's official account of the movements on the 11th, of General Smith's division, at our right, as well as of his later account of the 16th, when, being in command of the entire skirmish line of the division, with his own regiment and the 97th Indiana (of Colonel Cockerill's brigade) supported by the 48th Illinois

and 40th and 46th Ohio, he made a most gallant and successful reconnoissance, pushing up very close to the enemy's line and obtaining valuable information. He handled his command with such skill that, although exposed from 11 A.M. till late in the afternoon to a close fire of artillery and musketry, his loss was only one hundred killed, wounded and missing. From a special order of General Smith to Colonel Corse I make this extract: "I cannot too highly commend the gallantry you have displayed in two successful charges you have made. The true heart swells with emotions of pride in contemplating the heroism of those who, in their country's cause, charge forward under the iron hail of half-a-dozen rebel batteries and, exposed to a murderous fire of musketry from behind strong intrenchments, capture prisoners under their very guns." In this action our lamented companion and past commander displayed that same fertility of resource, coolness of thought and action, and dauntless heart, that within a year later at Allatoona, "held the fort" and gave him a national renown.

Time will not permit me to relate many instances of brave fighting and gallant charges during the seven days we confronted the enemy, gradually advancing our lines and ready at any moment for the general assault which we knew was to come. I will only speak of the sad and unsuccessful affair on the extreme right of General Ord's corps. This was one of those lamentable occurrences of which there were too many during the war where "somebody blundered." It took place about 9 A.M. of the 12th, and seems to have been due to ignorance of the enemy's position, no proper reconnoissance having been made. The line of investment on the right was not yet extended to the river. Briefly the situation was this: The Confederate defences, after crossing the railroad a mile below the city at an angle from north-west to south-east, instead of turning directly east to the river, as was supposed, continued in a south-easterly direction for a half mile and then turned sharply north-east to the river.

Colonel Isaac C. Pugh's brigade, consisting of the 3d Iowa,

28th, 41st and 53d Illinois and 5th Ohio Battery, of General J. G. Lauman's division, Thirteenth Corps, crossed the New Orleans and Jackson Railroad about two miles south of Jackson and was ordered to advance and connect with the right of General Hovey's division, west of the road, a half mile to the north, and presumably a half mile from the enemy's main line. With the left of this brigade on the railroad and skirmishers thrown out, he advanced a half mile through timber and dense undergrowth without opposition and without finding General Hovey's right. Suspicious that all was not right, Colonel Pugh halted his command at the edge of an open field and awaited supports and orders. General Lauman came up and ordered him forward. When crossing the open field the enemy's pickets were met and driven back, and presently a murderous fire from twelve guns, Cobb's and Slocum's Batteries at three hundred yards, open upon the devoted brigade. At the same time a deadly flank fire came from the 19th Louisiana, 32d Alabama, 1st and 3d Florida and 47th Georgia of Adams' and Stovall's Brigades of General Breckenridge's Division. In face of this whirlwind of lead and iron the brigade charged up to within seventy-five yards of the works, when it neither could advance or would retreat. For twenty awful minutes it lay there, melting away, and then the survivors fell back, the 3d Iowa alone saving their colors, but losing one hundred and fourteen out of two hundred and forty-one who went into the action, while the loss in the other regiments was in the same proportion. Colonel Pugh reported officially a loss of four hundred and sixty-five out of eight hundred and eighty officers and men engaged or 53% of his command. Of the 53d Illinois — of two hundred men who went into action — only sixty-six came out. Colonel Earle was killed and the lieutenant-colonel severely wounded. The 41st Illinois had forty killed, one hundred and twenty-two wounded, and Major Long killed. The 28th Illinois, of eight companies present, one hundred and twenty-eight men, had seventy-three killed and wounded and sixteen missing.

Many wounded who might have been saved, lay in the hot sun all the 12th and 13th and until noon of the 14th, and died without attention, the ground being unapproachable from either side and swept by both the Union and Confederate fire.

Who was to blame for this sad affair we never knew. General Lauman received the blame at the time and was ordered home. General Sherman said it "resulted from misunderstanding or misinterpretation of General Ord's minute instructions on the part of General Lauman." My remembrance is that the opinion in the army there was that General Ord was responsible and that Lauman was the scapegoat. About noon of the 14th General Johnston sent out a flag of truce, asking a suspension of hostilities for three hours in order to bury the Union soldiers killed in that fatal charge. The rapid decomposition of so many bodies in a hot July sun had infected the air for a long distance, annoying the living equally on both sides. The truce was granted and until 4 P.M. all firing ceased along the lines and the hostile pickets met and exchanged compliments and badinage, and some of the Confederates improved the opportunity to ask our men to take letters and mail them to northern relatives.

In the Confederate correspondence a letter of July 12th from General Johnston to General Breckenridge contains these words: "Do me the kindness, also, to express to the 1st, 3d and 4th Florida and 47th Georgia Regiments the pride and pleasure with which I have accepted the splendid trophies they have presented me."

Not long ago I read in the papers of the return by the Confederate captors of the flag of the 53d Illinois to its survivors. Would that the brave fellows who went into that fatal trap and saw their flags go down in blood, could also have been returned safe and sound.

Our division was relieved on the morning of the 12th by the Second Division, and during that day and the 13th lay in reserve not far in the rear, within easy range of their artillery that occasionally sent shells and solid shot over to us. The days were intensely hot and all suffered much, water being very scarce and

what there was being muddy and lukewarm. The Pearl River was too far away to be of any service to us. Operations had now settled down into the nature of a siege and when we relieved the Second Division on the 14th, it was in rifle-pits. Meantime, night and day, our artillery was busy. Every battery in position was ordered to fire one shot every five minutes, and some days as many as three thousand rounds were fired into Jackson and the Confederate lines.

The effect of this tremendous cannonade for a week can be no better expressed than in General Sherman's own words: "The city is one mass of charred ruins."

It will be understood, without going into details of the many bold advances of our skirmishers, that many available positions were secured to plant our artillery, and not only in our lines of the Ninth Corps, but along the front of the Fifteenth and Thirteenth Corps, our batteries had been advanced to within four hundred yards of the enemy's intrenched line, and were enabled to enfilade many parts of their line and keep down their fire.

The guns of General Ord's corps and Steele's division of the Fifteenth Corps, took Walker's and Loring's line in reverse, and those of General Blair's division as well as Smith's did as much for General French. The guns of General Osterhaus' division directed to the right, enfiladed the entire line of Breckenridge's Division, and the persistent, never-ending fire from our guns was a very severe strain upon the morale of the Confederate forces.

Every sortie they made was bloodily repulsed, for our infantry was closed up and ready at a moment's warning to engage the enemy. No part of the city or of the enemy's line was beyond the reach of our guns, and for not one moment, night or day, was a man safe except in a bomb-proof, from bursting shell or shot.

There is no question but their losses were very much greater than their official figures admitted.

I have said little of the operations in front of the Fifteenth

and Thirteenth Corps, as it would be simply a repetition of the skirmishing tactics pursued in our corps. The losses in the Fifteenth Corps were so slight as to prove that the troops kept well under cover, the loss being only eighty all told, or only one-fourteenth of our entire loss.

The ammunition train arrived late in the night of the 16th, and preparations were made for a grand attack the next day ; but when morning dawned, white flags waving from the enemy's earthworks told the story ; during the night the Confederates had retreated across the Pearl River and destroyed the bridges.

Our Second Division was in front and quickly entered Jackson, the flag of the 35th Massachusetts being the first to be placed on the Capitol. One hundred and thirty-seven Confederates who had not made the best use of their time were taken prisoners.

Our work was done, and while we felt chagrined at the escape of the enemy, we were glad to have been spared the further heavy loss of life which must have resulted from an assault, even if successful. And what was that work ? The railroad had been broken up for forty miles north and sixty miles south of Jackson ; the fine bridge above Canton destroyed, as well as all the machine shops and rolling stock of Canton ; in fact everything that could be of value to the enemy. In Jackson, hardly a building of any value except the State House, remained. Our losses in killed, wounded and missing were eleven hundred and twenty-two officers and men, and those of the Confederates, as nearly as can be ascertained, five hundred and seventy-five killed and wounded by Johnston's own report, and Sherman reported over one thousand prisoners taken.

Of our loss, two hundred and ninety-one was in the Ninth Corps and seven hundred and fifty-one in the Thirteenth. In closing let me quote from General Sherman's official Report dated July 28th, '63. After giving a detailed history of the expedition from beginning to end, he says :

"In reviewing the events thus feebly described, it may seem

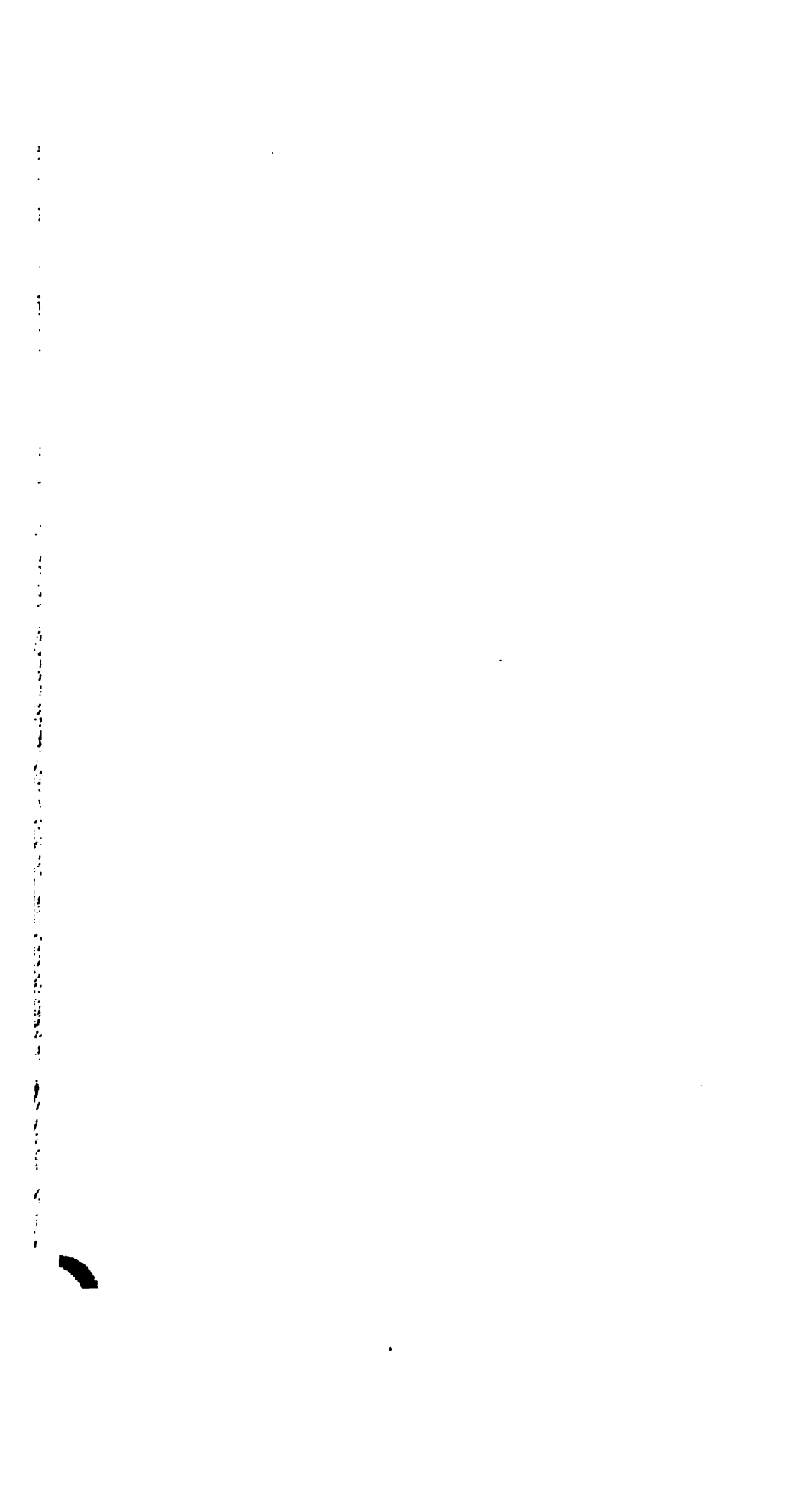
superfluous to call attention to the fact that the great mass of troops thus called for action were on the 4th day of July in the trenches before Vicksburg, where for near two months they had been toiling in the hot sun in close and stifling rifle-pits, and without stopping to indulge for a moment in the natural joy at the great success which had crowned their labors they were required again to march in the heat and dust for fifty miles, with little or no water save in muddy creeks, in cisterns already exhausted and in the surface ponds which the enemy in his retreat had tainted with dead cattle and hogs; that we crossed Black River by bridges of our own construction, and then had to deal with an army which had, under a leader of great renown, been formed specially to raise the siege of Vicksburg; far superior to us in cavalry, and but little inferior in either infantry or artillery; that we drove him fifty miles and left him in full retreat; that we have destroyed those great arteries of travel in the state which alone could enable him to assemble troops and molest our possession of the Mississippi River, and that we have so exhausted the land that no army can exist during this season without hauling in wagons all its supplies."

In the shadow of three such glorious events as Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Port Hudson, the capture of Jackson attracted little attention at the north. At any other time it would have been hailed with joy as a grand triumph of the northern arms.

We who had gone from the Army of the Potomac and so missed the glory of Gettysburg, feel that we only lost one glory to gain two others. No monument erected by our state marks any spot where Massachusetts men did her full honor in that Mississippi Campaign; but later on in defending Knoxville, and again in Virginia from the Wilderness to Petersburg, no Massachusetts regiments could show on their battle-flags two words more significant of sacrifice and victory than those gilded upon our tattered banners by General Grant's command:

"VICKSBURG & JACKSON."

## THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER



# THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER

BY

BREVET MAJOR GENERAL ADELBERT AMES, U.S.V.

## PART I.

ABOUT the first of December, 1864, when in command of the Third Division, Twenty-fourth Corps, of the Army of the James, then before Richmond, Va., I was notified I had been selected to lead my division in a movement, by sea, against some point of the Confederacy on the Atlantic coast.

At that time Wilmington, N.C., was the port through which the Confederacy received a large part of its munitions of war, and whence was shipped to England, in payment therefor, much of its cotton and tobacco. Wilmington was situated on the east bank of the Cape Fear River, thirty miles from its mouth, which was guarded by Fort Fisher.

Our Navy was untiring in its efforts to blockade that port, but was not successful.

The order from General Butler to General Weitzel relative to the expedition December 6th, 1864, was: "The Major General commanding has entrusted you with the command of the expedition about to embark for the North Carolina coast. It will consist of sixty-five hundred infantry, two batteries and fifty cavalry. The effective men of General Ames's division of the Twenty-fourth Corps will furnish the infantry force. General Paine is under your orders and General Ames will be ordered to report to you in person immediately."

My division, of three brigades, was composed of New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, and Indiana troops, about thirty-three hundred in number. General Paine had a division of colored troops.

We embarked at Bermuda Hundreds, Va., December 8th, and our transports reached the place of rendezvous off New Inlet, N.C., Thursday, the 15th. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, we awaited the coming of the Navy.

Admiral Porter, commanding our fleet, arrived Sunday evening, the 18th. The next day the water was too rough to make a landing on the ocean beach. Towards evening a north-east gale coming up, the transports were sent to Beaufort for coal and water, as the ten days' supply had run short, where they were delayed by the weather and the difficulty of getting coal, until Saturday, the 24th.

I did not go to Beaufort, as my ship, on which was one of my brigades, was well prepared for such an emergency.

General Butler, followed by his fleet of transports, returned to New Inlet on Saturday, the 24th of December, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon.

The powder boat, which played such a notorious part in this expedition, had been exploded at about two o'clock on the morning of the same day.

The idea of the powder boat was General Butler's, but it was approved of and adopted by the Navy, which furnished the vessel and its share of the two hundred and fifteen tons of gun-powder used. The Navy held control of this experiment from first to last.

The explosion was untimely, and a failure. Commodore Jeffers of the Navy reports: "A part of the programme required that the vessel should be grounded, which appears not to have been the case."

Commander Rhind writes: "That, owing to the want of confinement and insufficient fusing of the mass, much of the powder was blown away before ignition and its effect lost."

Admiral Porter reports: "That the powder was finally exploded from the effects of a fire kindled in the fore-castle. No results of value were to be expected from this mode. It was proposed only as a final resort, in order to prevent the vessel, in any contingency, from falling into the hands of the enemy."

Commander James Parker, U. S. Navy, stated to the New York Loyal Legion, October 5, 1892: "We all believed in it (the powder boat) from the Admiral down, but when it proved so laughable a failure we, of the Navy, laid its paternity upon General Butler."

Colonel Lamb, in command, describes Fort Fisher as follows: "At the land-face of Fort Fisher the peninsula was about half a mile wide, Cape Fear River being on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. This face commenced about a hundred feet from the river with a half bastion, and extended with a heavy curtain to a full bastion on the ocean side, where it joined the sea-face. The work was built to withstand the heaviest artillery fire. The outer slope was twenty feet high from the berm to the top of the parapet, at an angle of forty-five degrees, and was sodded with marsh grass, which grew luxuriantly. The parapet was not less than twenty-five feet thick, with an inclination of only one foot. The revetment was five feet nine inches high, from the floor of the gun chambers, and these were some twelve feet or more from the interior plane. The guns were all mounted in barbette, Columbiad carriages; there was not a single casemated gun in the fort. Between the gun chambers, containing one or two guns each (there were twenty heavy guns on the land-face), there were" (some eighteen) "heavy traverses, exceeding in size any known to engineers, to protect from an enfilading fire. They extended out some twelve feet on the parapet, running back thirty feet or more. The gun chambers were reached from the rear by steps. In each traverse was an alternate magazine or bomb-proof, the latter ventilated by an air-chamber. Passageways penetrated the traverses in the interior of the work, forming additional bomb-proofs for the reliefs of the guns.

"The sea-face was a mile long, and for a hundred yards from the northeast bastion was of the same massive character as the land-face.

"As a defence against infantry there was a system of sub-

terre torpedoes extending across the peninsula, five to six hundred feet from the land-face, and so disconnected that an explosion of one would not affect the others; inside the torpedoes, about fifty feet from the berm of the work, extending from the river bank to the seashore, was a heavy palisade of sharpened logs nine feet high, pierced for musketry, and so laid out as to have an enfilading fire on the centre, where there was a redoubt guarding a sally-port from which two Napoleons were run out as occasion required. At the river end of the palisade was a deep and muddy slough, across which was a bridge, the entrance on the river road into the fort; commanding this bridge was a Napoleon gun. There were three mortars in rear of the land-face."

This strong work had, at the time of our first expedition, a garrison of fourteen hundred men, nine hundred of whom were veterans.

Colonel Lamb had been incited to the utmost by General Lee, who had sent him word that he "must hold the fort or he could not subsist his army."

On the morning of the 24th the fleet of Admiral Porter moved in towards New Inlet and opened fire on the fort. The character of this bombardment and the demands made by the Admiral on his ships and sailors I will let him tell.

In his letter to the Secretary of the Navy of the 24th of December, 1864, he says: "I have the honor to inform you that I attacked the forts at the mouth of the Cape Fear River to-day at 12.30. . . . After getting the ships in position we silenced it in about an hour and a half, there being no troops here to take possession. I am merely firing now to keep up practice. The forts are nearly demolished, and as soon as troops come we can take possession. We have set them on fire, blown some of them up, and all that is wanted now is troops to land and go into them." The Admiral failed to mention, in his letter, the fact that I had offered one thousand men and co-operation, although, in his testimony before the Committee on

the Conduct of the War, he said: "General Ames had a thousand men there, and he sent on board and told me he was ready to land."

In his letter of the 26th he says, referring to the bombardment of the 24th: "In an hour and fifteen minutes after the first shot was fired not a shot came from the fort. Finding that the batteries were silenced completely I directed the ships to keep up a moderate fire in hopes of attracting the attention of the transports and bringing them in." In this same letter of December 26th Admiral Porter says, speaking of the bombardment of the forts on December 25th: "The firing this day was slow, only sufficient to amuse the enemy while the army landed. In the bombardment of the 25th the men were engaged firing slowly for seven hours. . . . Everything was coolly done throughout the day, and I witnessed some beautiful practice."

In a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, December 29, after the fleet had left and the transports had gone back to Hampton Roads, he writes: "At no time did I permit the vessels to open on them with all their batteries, limiting some of them to about two shots a minute, and permitting the large vessels to fight only one division of guns at a time; and the bombardment cost only a certain amount of shells, which I would expend in a month's target practice anyhow." Such are the salient features of the reports of Admiral Porter.

General Whiting, who was in the fort, and who commanded that military district, says the slight damage done by this cannonading was repaired at night, and that "the garrison was in no instance driven from its guns, the palisade was in perfect order, and the mines the same, the wires not having been cut."

General Weitzel testified before the Committee on the Conduct of the War: "I made a reconnoissance of the fort and saw that the work, as a defensive work, was not injured at all, except that one gun about midway of the land face was dismounted. I did not see a single opening in the row of palisades that was

in front of the ditch ; it seemed to be perfectly intact." All in the fort agree that Admiral Porter was mistaken as to the effects of the cannonading.

So much as to the condition of the fort.

On the morning of the 25th all our transports anchored near the shore some two or three miles north of the fort, and the troops immediately began to land.

I had been selected to storm the fort with my division.

My report on December 28th is as follows: "Brevet Brigadier General Curtis and five hundred of his brigade were the first to land, and were taken towards the fort by General Weitzel for a reconnoissance. . . . It was dusk when I reached the front. I then heard that the First Brigade was to remain where it was until further orders, and that if any attack was made the responsibility would rest with the officer in immediate command. At this time I did not know that it had been decided not to attack the fort. Upon the report of Curtis that he could take the fort I sent his brigade forward to make the attempt." In his report Curtis says: "On my arrival at this point I received orders from General Ames to return and re-establish my lines as they were, and, if possible, to occupy the fort, and I at once ordered my skirmishers forward, etc. . . . The enemy, having cover of the darkness, opened on the skirmishers as they advanced with musketry and canister, but did not prevent their establishing the line in its former position, with the reserves in close proximity." Curtis made no further effort to take the fort, as I had ordered him to do, but sent word to me that he was "occupying his former position." Why he failed to assault the fort after I assumed the responsibility and gave the order I have never known. At this time an order reached me to return to our ships, which we did, and the first expedition ended.

An incident occurred which had much to do in giving an erroneous idea of the condition of the fort and garrison.

One of our lieutenants approached the fort and captured its

flag, which had been shot away by the Navy, and which had fallen with the flag staff on the outer slope of the parapet to the ditch.

On this point General Weitzel testifies: "I sent for Lieutenant Walling and questioned him about it, and he told me that a shell had knocked the flagstaff outside and on top of the parapet, and the flag hung over into or outside of the ditch. Thinking that probably the rebels had not observed it, he crept up on his hands and knees to the palisading, found a hole in it that one of the shells had made, crept through the hole and up to the flag, and got it and got away with it without being observed."

Let us see why our expedition terminated thus abruptly.

Weitzel had been ordered by Butler to land and make a reconnoissance. In his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War he gave his experience during the war in charging and defending field works, and continuing, said: "After that experience, with the information I had obtained from reading and study — for before this war I was an instructor at the Military Academy for three years under Professor Mahan, on those very subjects — remembering well the remarks of the Lieutenant General commanding, that it was his intention I should command that expedition, because another officer selected by the war department had once shown timidity, and in face of the fact that I had been appointed a major general only twenty days before, and needed confirmation; notwithstanding all this, I went back to General Butler, and told him I considered it would be murder to order an attack on that work with that force."

Colonel Lamb says, in reference to the loss of his flag: "I had no fear of an assault, and because, during a bombardment which rendered an assault impossible, I covered my men, and a few straggling skirmishers, too few to attract attention, got near the fort, and some gallant officers thought they could have carried the work, it does not follow that they would not have paid dearly for their temerity if they had made the attempt."

General Whiting speaks to the same effect.

Now, who is to say that Weitzel, Whiting and Lamb were mistaken as to the situation that day? Is it the brave soldier, who crept unseen through a hole in the palisade to the parapet and took a flag from a staff which had been shot away?

Is it Admiral Porter, who wrote to the Secretary of the Navy January 17th, 1865: "I have since visited Fort Fisher and the adjoining works, and find their strength greatly beyond what I had conceived. An engineer might be excusable in saying they could not be captured except by regular siege. I wonder, even now, how it was done. The work, as I said before, is really stronger than the Malakoff tower, which defied so long the combined power of France and England." In a letter of the 16th of January to the Secretary of the Navy, he says: "I was in Fort Malakoff a few days after it surrendered to the French and English; the combined armies of the two nations were many months capturing that stronghold, and it won't compare, either in size or strength, to Fort Fisher."

I have no hesitancy in saying that they were not mistaken, though it is true that without personal knowledge of the character of the fort, and, for the time, believing Curtis, I ordered him to take it on his assertion that he could do so.

What was not possible December 25th, was made possible January 15th, through an efficient bombardment on the part of the navy and the co-operation of two thousand sailors and marines and an additional force of one thousand four hundred infantry.

January 1st, 1865, Grant wrote to Secretary Stanton: "The fact is, there are but two ways of taking Fort Fisher, operating from the water; one is to surprise them whilst there is but a small garrison defending the place; the other is for the navy to send a portion of their fleet into Cape Fear River. . . ." He continues: "In the three days of good weather which elapsed after the army had reached the scene of action, before the navy appeared, our troops had the chance of capturing Fort Fisher

whilst it had an insufficient garrison to hold it. The delay gave the enemy time to accumulate a force. . . . The failure before was the result of delays by the navy."

So, of Grant's two ways of taking the fort, one by surprise failed, as he said, because of the delay of the navy, and as to the other, Colonel Comstock reports to Grant, January 9th: "There is no hope, at least at present, of the admiral's trying to run by Fort Fisher."

Grant ordered and intended that Weitzel should have command of the expedition. North Carolina was in Butler's military department. His order retained Weitzel as his subordinate.

Though Grant may have intended and ordered certain action on the part of our expedition in December, 1865, on the first of January, 1865, he wrote the Secretary of War, as just quoted, that there were but two ways to take the fort — by surprise or by the occupancy of the river by the navy. There was no surprise, the navy was not in the river, the bombardment of the fort was ineffectual, Weitzel decided against an assault, Butler acquiesced and ordered the expedition back to Virginia, saying to Weitzel at the same time that he, Butler, would assume all responsibility, as he could stand the blame better than could Weitzel, the professional soldier.

The Committee on the Conduct of the War was composed of the leading men in Congress at that time. Much experience in the investigation of military affairs had made them, to say the least, fairly capable judges. They could command any witness, they were critical and severe in their examinations, and their conclusions were reached without fear or favor. Honest Ben Wade was their chairman. This is their decision:

"In conclusion, your Committee would say, from all the testimony before them, that the determination of General Butler not to assault the fort seems to have been fully justified by all facts and circumstances then known or afterwards ascertained."

Few can comprehend the penalty General Butler had to pay for his action on this occasion. The war was within a few

months of its end, and he had hoped for a share of the honors conferred on those who served faithfully and well, but he was sent home, and the whole nation condemned him for the failure. General Weitzel, one of the best of men, and one of our ablest generals, was humbled in spirit before the storm of censure and ridicule. But all that came after the capture of the fort on our second expedition.

## PART II.

The second expedition was started without delay. January 2nd, 1865, General A. H. Terry was put in command. On the 3rd we left camp, began re-embarkation on the 4th, and completed it on the 5th.

I had thirty-three hundred picked men in my division. General Paine had the same number in his. There were added a brigade of fourteen hundred men under Colonel J. G. Abbott and two batteries of light artillery of three and six guns each. Colonel Comstock, who represented Grant on our first expedition, returned with us on the second.

The transports put to sea on the morning of the 6th. A severe storm drove them into Beaufort.

The troops were landed on the 13th, some two miles north of the fort.

Upon landing the first work on hand was to establish a line of breastworks from the ocean beach to the river to keep the enemy in the direction of Wilmington from interfering with our operations.

A reconnoissance was made. Terry reports: "As a result of this reconnoissance, and in view of the extreme difficulty which might be expected in landing supplies and the materials for a siege on the often tempestuous beach, it was decided to attempt an assault the next day, provided that, in the mean time, the fire of the navy should so far destroy the palisades as to make one practicable. This decision was communicated to Admiral Porter, who at once placed a division of his vessels in a position to

accomplish this last-named object. It was arranged, in consultation with him, that a heavy bombardment from all the vessels should commence early in the morning and continue up to the moment of the assault, and that even then it should not cease, but should be diverted from the points of attack to the other parts of the work. It was decided that the assault should be made at 3 P.M., that the army should attack on the western half of the land-face, and that a column of sailors and marines should assault the northeast bastion. The fire of the navy continued during the night. At 8 A.M. of the 13th all of the vessels, except a division left to aid in the defence of our northern line, moved into position, and a fire, magnificent alike for its power and accuracy, was opened," and continued all day Saturday, Saturday night and Sunday, till 3.30 P.M. "Ames's division had been selected for the assault. . . . At 3.25 P.M. all the preparations were completed, the order to move forward was given to Ames, and a concerted signal was made to Admiral Porter to change the direction of his fire."

The situation at this time was as follows: Some two miles north of the fort General Paine had established a line of breast-works, from ocean to river, facing north, with his own division on the left and Colonel Abbott's brigade on the right. On the sea-beach, about half a mile from the fort, were two thousand sailors and marines under command of Fleet Captain K. R. Breese. On the east were sixty-four ships of war, under Admiral Porter, cannonading the fort. My three brigades were in line, one behind the other, ranging from three to five hundred yards from the fort; the left of each line nearly opposite the middle of the land-face of the fort, the right near the river. A body of sharpshooters were pushed forward, and the whole division was covered from the fire of the enemy, as far as possible, by the inequalities of the ground and slight pits formed by throwing up the sand.

Terry, Comstock and I were in a small advanced outwork about half a mile from the fort. My able and gallant Adjutant

General, General Charles A. Carleton, has made the following record: "General Terry turned to General Ames and said: 'General Ames, the signal agreed upon for the assault has been given.' General Ames asked: 'Have you any special orders to give?' General Terry replied: 'No, you understand the situation and what is desired to be accomplished. I leave everything to your discretion.'" Thus was given me the unrestricted command of the fighting forces.

At once I directed Captain Lawrence of my staff to order Curtis, commanding the First Brigade, to charge, striking the parapet at the end nearest the river. The palisade had been sufficiently broken and shot away by the fire of the navy to permit the passage of the troops. As I approached the fort I watched with anxious eyes the charge of the First Brigade.

Captain Lawrence heroically led the charge of that part of the brigade which advanced at this time. He was the first through the palisade, and while reaching for a guidon to plant on the first traverse, his hand was shot away and he was dangerously wounded in the neck, but with this lodgement on the first traverse, the force of the charge was spent. I quickly ordered Colonel Pennypacker's brigade, which was close at hand, to charge and sweep down the parapet to the ocean.

I will not attempt a description of the battle. It was a charge of my brigades, one after the other, followed by desperate fighting at close quarters over the parapet and traverses and in and through the covered ways. All the time we were exposed to the musketry and artillery of the enemy, while our own Navy was thundering away, occasionally making us the victims of its fire.

The official reports of my officers gave no adequate idea of their gallant deeds, but they must supply the form and coloring of the warlike scenes of that eventful Sunday.

Colonel Daggett, in command of the First Brigade, January 17th, reports: "At about 3 P.M., General Curtis having received orders to that effect from General Ames, through Captain Law-

rence, the brigade advanced to the charge, so as to strike the sally-port, that having been deemed the only vulnerable point of the work, and, after a desperate struggle, the advance of the brigade reached the parapet of the fort and scaled it to the first traverse, where the guidon of the 117th New York was planted — the first colors on the fort."

Major O. P. Harding, who came out of the fight in command of the Second Brigade, reports: "The brigade was ordered to assault the fort, which was done in a gallant manner and under a heavy fire of grape and musketry, and entered the fort through a sally-port near the river. The 203rd Pennsylvania, commanded by Colonel J. W. Moore, was the first to enter the fort, closely followed by the 97th Pennsylvania, commanded by First Lieutenant John Wainwright. The colors of each of those regiments reached the parapet about the same time, those of the 97th borne by Colonel Pennypacker, and of the 203rd by Colonel Moore. Colonel Pennypacker was seriously wounded while planting his colors on the third traverse, and Colonel Moore fell dead while passing the second traverse, waving his colors and commanding his men to follow. After entering the fort the brigade became somewhat broken up; nevertheless, both officers and men behaved gallantly until its capture."

"After the fall of Lieutenant Colonel Lyman, 203rd Pennsylvania, who fell on the sixth traverse, I commanded the regiment until about 5 P.M., when ordered by General Ames to take command of the brigade, which I immediately organized."

Captain H. B. Essington, commanding 203rd Pennsylvania, reports: "The regiment charged on the right of the Second Brigade, and was the first regiment of the brigade to enter the fort, going in with the First (Curtis's) Brigade. After having assisted in capturing the first two mounds, a portion of the regiment went to the right and stationed themselves behind a bank in the open field south of the fort. The latter portion then charged across the plain, by order of the commanding general (General Ames), until opposite the seventh or eighth traverse,

where they threw up an embankment with their tin plates and shovels, which they held until the fort surrendered, keeping up a steady fire on the enemy."

Let me say, in passing, that Colonel Pennypacker's conduct in leading his brigade with the colors of his own regiment, placed him second to none for gallantry that day. It would be difficult to overestimate the value of his example to his brigade.

Entering the fort and passing to the rear of the parapet at the west end, I made an examination of it from that position, and decided to use my third brigade, Colonel Bell's, with its left by the parapet, right extended south and west inside the fort, and charge into the angle formed by the land and sea faces. I ordered Bell forward with his brigade to report to me. Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, commanding the Third Brigade, January 19th, reports: "Colonel Bell was ordered by General Ames to remain near him for the purpose of receiving orders." Unfortunately Colonel Bell was killed in the advance, gallantly leading his brigade. The part of his brigade which reached me was in a somewhat disorganized condition. I formed it as best I could for the charge. Owing to the obstructions of the demolished quarters of the garrison and the fire of the enemy from the front (the angle had been partially filled in and was protected by a curtain), and from the right, as well as the fire of our Navy, the advance was checked. The men were in a very exposed position, and as no advantage could be gained there I ordered them to join the other troops in pushing seaward on the land-face of the fort. Lieutenant Colonel Johnson further reports: "The brigade entered the fort conjointly with a portion of the First (Curtis's) Brigade, at the left bastion, a portion moving along the terre-plain and a portion on the ramparts, parapets and slopes, some of the officers and men in the advance with officers and men of other brigades, all vying with each other."

Owing to the contracted space in which the fighting was done, brigade and regimental formations were impossible. What

was accomplished was through the heroic efforts of small bodies of officers and men.

From time to time I sent to Terry, who was in the earthwork half a mile away, reports of the progress I was making.

I had previously learned that the sailors and marines who had made an attack on the sea angle had been quickly repulsed.

As the sun sank to the horizon, the ardor of the assault abated. Our advance was but slow. Ten of my officers had been killed, forty-seven wounded, and about five hundred men were killed and wounded. Among the killed was one brigade commander, the other two were wounded and disabled. I now requested Terry to join me in the fort. It was dark before he and Comstock arrived. I explained the situation.

Colonel Abbott's brigade, which had been relieved from its position in the line facing Wilmington, by the defeated sailors and marines, had been ordered to report to me.

I decided to make my chief effort with the reinforcements by moving the troops by the flank between the palisade and the foot of the fort until the head of the column should reach the northeast angle by the ocean, then face to the right and rush the men up and over the parapet ; and at the same time continue the struggle for the traverses. Colonel J. C. Abbott, commanding Second Brigade, First Division, in his report of January 15th, says: "Reaching the fort about dark I reported to General Ames. By order of General Ames I first threw the 3rd New Hampshire Volunteers, Captain Trickey commanding, along the portion of the north face of the work already occupied by his troops and relieved them ; also by General Ames's order, I threw out the 7th Connecticut Volunteers, Captain Marble commanding, as a picket in rear of the work, the right of the line resting on Cape Fear River. During this time the enemy occupied all the eastern and about one-third the northern face of the work. At about 9 o'clock, by order of General Ames, I then proceeded to dislodge the enemy from the remainder of the fort. I then advanced the 7th New Hampshire, Lieutenant

Colonel Rollins commanding. They at once and gallantly charged up the slope enveloping the sea angle of the work, meeting a sharp fire from the enemy, who were stationed behind the parapets, and in rear of the main work."

Captain William H. Trickey, commanding 3rd New Hampshire Regiment, reports January 18th: "I was directed by Colonel Abbott, commanding brigade, to move my regiment to the extreme advance held by the Second Division and open fire upon the enemy; was thus engaged for nearly an hour, having, to a great extent, silenced the enemy's fire; was then directed by Colonel Abbott to take and hold, with twenty men, the next traverse in front, the remainder of my command being left in several traverses to keep up the fire upon the enemy. We took the traverse, as directed, driving the enemy out. Thinking we could go farther, we charged and took the next two, with a like result. After taking the third traverse, having met with considerable resistance, I did not deem it prudent to go farther with so few men, and opened a vigorous fire upon the enemy, who was rallying for the recapture of the traverses; we held the enemy in check until the arrival of the 7th New Hampshire and 6th Connecticut, who charged and took the remainder of the work."

Lieutenant Colonel Rollins reports: "At 10 P. M. moved my regiment inside the fort, and was ordered by General Ames to take two traverses, and three, if possible, the number not then taken. I moved over the third traverse of the fort, and advanced rapidly inside the stockade until I reached the battery on the northeast angle of the fort, where I formed the right wing of the regiment, leaving the left in support. I then ordered a charge and captured the three remaining traverses and batteries, then pushed on by the right flank, and by so doing cut off the angle of the fort, moved to the right, and by a rapid and determined advance, captured the remaining traverses and batteries of the fort proper."

Thus, after some seven hours' fighting, more than five of

which were after dark, the land-face of the fort was occupied and all resistance ceased. The enemy fled to the shelter of Battery Buchanan, at the end of the point, two miles away. Terry took Abbott and a part of his brigade and marched to Battery Buchanan. Abbott reports: "I was met by the Adjutant General of the General commanding the enemy's forces, who tendered the surrender of the battery, upon which I referred to General Terry, who would soon arrive. . . . General Terry having arrived, received the surrender of the work and the force."

Colonel Abbott was mistaken. Terry was too late. Captain Lockwood of my staff had already received the surrender.

It was after ten o'clock. The task set for us at half-past three was finished. Our work was done.

The statement of their achievement is the highest eulogy that can be passed upon our soldiers.

A grievous accident occurred early the next morning, which killed and wounded one hundred and thirty of our gallant heroes. It was the explosion of the magazine of the fort. A board of enquiry was organized and found, "that the following are the main facts, viz.: 1, immediately after the capture of the fort, General Ames gave orders to Lieutenant Colonel Samuel M. Zent to place guards on all the magazines and bomb-proofs. 2, Lieutenant Colonel Zent commenced on the northwest corner of the fort, next the river, following the traverses round, and placed guards on thirty-one entrances under the traverses. The main magazines, which afterwards exploded, being in the rear of the traverses, escaped his notice, and, consequently, had no guards from his regiment or any other."

General Bragg reports that the defenders of the fort numbered, all told, about one hundred and ten commissioned officers and twenty-five hundred men — their casualties being over four hundred. A few escaped across the river, in boats, under cover of the darkness; the rest became our prisoners.

Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War, had been visiting Sher-

man at Savannah after his march through Georgia, and on his way north called at Fort Fisher, where he had an interview with Terry.

Upon Stanton's arrival at Fortress Monroe, Va., he sent a despatch to President Lincoln marked "official," dated Tuesday, 10 A.M., January 17, 1865. In this despatch Stanton mentions Terry, my brigade commanders and some regimental commanders, but omits my name altogether. Among other things he says: "The assault on the other and most difficult side of the fort was made by a column of three thousand troops of the old Tenth Corps, led by Colonel Curtis, under the immediate supervision of General Terry."

This is not true, as the official reports show, in any other sense than that Curtis's brigade first reached the fort under my immediate orders with Terry half a mile away. An earlier attempt to make public these facts has been impracticable, as the volume of the war records covering this event was not published till 1894.

With this as a preface I will add to the extracts of the reports of some of my subordinate officers already given, the report of General Terry, who was my only superior officer. He says: "Of General Ames I have already spoken in a letter recommending his promotion. He commanded all the troops engaged and was constantly under fire. His great coolness, good judgment and skill were never more conspicuous than in this assault."

These official reports show, as Terry says, that I "commanded all the troops engaged" from the first act, when my aide, Captain A. G. Lawrence, led the first brigade into the fort, to the last act, when the garrison surrendered to my aide, Captain H. C. Lockwood.

The sailors and marines who assaulted in column the north-east angle of the fort along the sea beach, were a body of two thousand men, made up of detachments from different ships. Naturally enough, Captain Breese found it, as has been stated,

an unwieldy mass. The sixteen hundred sailors were armed only with pistols and cutlasses. They were quickly repulsed. Few reached the parapet. Once checked, they turned and fled, losing three hundred in killed and wounded. Admiral Porter testified : " I suppose the whole thing was over in fifteen minutes, as far as the sailors were concerned, for they were cut down like sheep."

Later, this force was sent to the line of intrenchments facing Wilmington, relieving Colonel Abbott's brigade, which reported to me. Of course Admiral Porter expected his sailors to carry the fort, but, alas! he had been deceived as to its defensive capabilities, which deception resulted in the apparently needless sacrifice of his gallant sailors.

Our Navy, in its ships and armament, was the most powerful that ever existed up to that time. In officers and men it never had its equal, and never will till an equally enlightened, powerful and liberty-loving people again rise, in their might, in a struggle for self-preservation.

As to the effect on the fort of the second bombardment, Colonel Lamb writes : " The land armament, with palisades and torpedoes, had been destroyed. For the first time in the history of sieges the land defences of the works were destroyed, not by the act of the besieging army, but by the concentrated fire, direct and enfilading, of an immense fleet, poured upon them without intermission, until torpedo wires were cut, palisades breached so that they actually afforded cover for assailants, and the slopes of the work were rendered practicable for assault."

Why the first expedition was a failure and the second a success has never been rightly understood. The military situations have been obscured by the contention between General Butler and Admiral Porter, though the most amicable relations existed between the army and navy.

It has been believed that the fort was in the same condition on both occasions, and that it was but poorly garrisoned on the first. Those who so held were in error in both particulars.

According to Badeau, Grant's historian : "Curtis declared that the fort could have been carried on the first expedition, and that at the moment when they were recalled they virtually had possession." This declaration has been accepted as the truth.

We can examine the facts, now that the official reports have been published, and form our own opinions on this point, which has been the pivot of the whole controversy.

It appears from Curtis's report that he had "pushed the right of his skirmishers to within seventy-five paces of the fort and had sent back to his reserves for two hundred men with which to possess the fort, but his messenger was there informed that orders from the department commander bade him retire," which he did.

Let us see what these two hundred men would have had to do to make what Curtis calls a "virtual," an actual possession of the fort.

Colonel Lamb had a force of fourteen hundred men, nine hundred of whom were veterans. Whiting, Lamb and other officers commend the discipline, skill and gallantry of the garrison. I will not take time to quote from their reports. They all show that the officers of the fort were keenly alive to our movements. Colonel Lamb states that he intentionally kept his men hidden from view. He was perfectly familiar with the surroundings, both within and without the fort.

Now, the one question to decide is, could those two hundred men, sent for by Curtis, have taken possession of that palisaded Malakoff fortress, with its garrison of fourteen hundred men ?

Lieutenant Colonel Barney, who commanded our forces behind the picket line, nowhere intimates that we had any kind of possession of the fort.

Even Curtis reports, officially, that his skirmishers were met with musketry and canister, and that he retired under a heavy fire.

In making a decision, Lamb's report must not be overlooked. He reports : "That it was dark at 5.30, when the fleet ceased

firing. No assault could be made while the fleet was firing. When the firing ceased the parapets (which were twenty feet high) were at once manned and half of the garrison (seven hundred men) were stationed outside the work behind the palisade, which was nine feet high and pierced for musketry." What soldier will say we had "virtual" possession of the fort under such circumstances?

The second expedition took this question from the realm of speculation.

Three weeks after the first attempt we were back again before the fort, which, because of the efficient bombardment of the Navy, was far less capable of resistance. A column of two thousand sailors and marines were to make a gallant assault on the sea angle simultaneously with ours, thereby to create a diversion, greatly to our advantage.

Curtis had in his brigade, now forming the first line, more than twice as many men as he had before the fort on the first expedition. Again I gave him the order to take the fort. Did he take it? No. His brigade, led by Captain Lawrence, made a lodgment on one corner of it — a lodgment so uncertain that I immediately ordered up Colonel Pennypacker's brigade, which, inspired and led by him and Colonel Moore, reached the third traverse and made our foothold secure. Such are the official records of the battle.

I wish to touch one other point. Badeau writes in this same history: "The fighting was continued from traverse to traverse, until at 9 o'clock the troops had nearly reached the bastion. Bell had been killed and Pennypacker wounded, and Curtis now sent back for reinforcements. The advance party was in imminent peril, for the guns from both bastions and the mound batteries were turned upon them. At this crisis a staff officer brought orders from Terry to stop fighting and begin intrenching. Curtis was inflamed with the magnificent rage of battle, and fairly roared at this command, 'Then we shall lose whatever we have gained. The enemy will drive us from here in the

morning.' While he spoke he was struck by a shell, and fell senseless to the earth. The hero of Fort Fisher had fallen, and the fort was not yet carried. Ames, who was near him, sent an officer to Terry to report that Curtis was killed, and that his dying request was that the fighting might go on. It was also Ames's opinion that the battle should proceed. Terry caught the contagion, and determined to continue the assault, even if it became necessary to abandon the line of defence towards Wilmington. Abbott's reinforcements were at once ordered forward, and as they entered the fort the rebels on the bastion gave way and Fort Fisher was carried." It is due to Badeau to state that he says in a note that he "obtained the account of this assault from a paper written by an aide-de-camp to General Curtis."

This remarkable statement deserves a moment's consideration. If it be true, then all the chief honors must fall on one head. But it is not true. If Terry gave orders to stop fighting and begin intrenching, who can believe that it was through the "contagion caught" by him from Curtis that the fight continued, or that he would "abandon the line towards Wilmington" to try uncertainties at the fort?

Terry reports: "When Bell's brigade was ordered into action I foresaw that more troops would probably be needed, and sent an order for Abbott's brigade to move down from the north line, at the same time requesting Captain Breese to replace them with his sailors and marines. I also directed General Paine to send me one of the strongest regiments of his own division; these troops arrived at dusk and reported to General Ames."

This treatment of Terry and the ignoring of division, brigade and regimental commanders find no justification in the facts. Terry is entitled to every honor due his position. Pennypacker and Bell cannot be swept aside so lightly, nor the regimental commanders, whose names I need not give here.

I would say specifically to that reference to myself, that I did not send any request, "dying" or other, from Curtis to Terry that the fighting might go on.

If Terry intended my division to stop fighting and begin intrenching he did not send the order to Curtis, one of my brigade commanders, nor would Terry send reinforcements to Curtis over my head.

According to this aide, Curtis was wounded at 9 o'clock while criticising Terry's order to stop fighting and begin intrenching. I say in my report that Curtis was wounded "a short time before dark" on that brief winter's day.

I saw him in and emerge from a covered way at the west end of the parapet. He approached me and began to speak; almost at the same time a shot struck him down. Colonel Daggett, who succeeded to the command of Curtis's brigade, reports two days after: Curtis was seriously wounded about 4.30. General Carleton, who was with me at the time, and picked up his sword as he fell, says Curtis was shot at about 4.30.

And yet Badeau would have us believe that Curtis was wounded while criticising Terry's order to stop fighting and begin intrenching, at 9 o'clock, some four hours after Curtis fell senseless at my feet.

In fact, he was wounded before dark, about an hour and a half after the battle began, and some four hours before the fort was taken. The exact minute is of no importance. Participants in a battle are poor judges of passing time.

In this instance it is fixed accurately enough in the official reports of Daggett, Abbott and myself, as well as Carleton's statement of his recollections.

General Terry says in his official report of the battle: "Brigadier General Curtis and Colonels Pennypacker, Bell and Abbott, the brigade commanders, led them with the utmost gallantry. Curtis was wounded after fighting in the front rank, rifle in hand; Pennypacker while carrying the standard of one

of his regiments, the first man in a charge over a traverse ; Bell was mortally wounded near the palisade."

This is all, literally all, Terry says of exceptional services by Curtis. "Fighting in the front rank, rifle in hand" is most commendable under the circumstances, but it does not in itself justify claims for exceptional honors.

My report says: "The conduct of the officers and men of this division was most gallant. . . . Where the name of every officer and man engaged in this desperate conflict should be submitted, I shall at present only be able to give a few of those most conspicuous. It is hoped all may be properly rewarded.

"Brevet Brig. General N. M. Curtis, commanding First Brigade, was prominent throughout the day for his bravery, coolness and judgment. His services cannot be overestimated. He fell a short time before dark, seriously wounded in the head by a canister shot.

"Colonel Pennypacker, commanding the Second Brigade, was seriously wounded while planting his colors on the third traverse of the work. This officer was surpassed by none, and his absence during the day was most deeply felt and seriously regretted.

"Colonel L. Bell, commanding Third Brigade, was mortally wounded while crossing the bridge in advance of the palisading. He was an able and efficient officer ; one not easily replaced.

"Colonel J. W. Moore, 203rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, behaved with the most distinguished gallantry. He was killed while passing the second traverse of the fort, in advance of his regiment, waving his colors. Few equalled, none surpassed this brave officer."

My report on Curtis is not less generous than Terry's ; but it was not intended to, and I doubt if it does, sustain his pretensions of this day.

The official records, written thirty-two years ago, must be the foundation for all claims of honor and distinction. Nothing can now be added to them or taken from them. By them we all must be judged.

Misrepresentations greatly injured General Butler, and deeply humiliated General Weitzel. Truth has been outraged — truth overslow in the pursuit of falsehood, not always the most agreeable company.

In this paper I have attempted to right a wrong. I have given few opinions of my own. I have called up the actors themselves, and have let them speak in their own words — sometimes under oath — always under a sense of grave responsibility.

[The writer wishes to state to those who heard the paper read before the Commanderies of the Loyal Legion of the States of Massachusetts, November 4th, 1896, and New York, February 3rd, 1897, that, in the accompanying pamphlet, in which it is reproduced, he has omitted reference to the time when a flag was captured and the time and place a Lieutenant was made a prisoner, and also as to having heard of and from General Curtis.

This has been done because the accuracy of these statements has been questioned, and also because, accurate or inaccurate, they are immaterial to the issues involved.

He prefers to stand on the official records made at the time and not on recollections after a period of thirty-two years.

If, however, any of his hearers offers the slightest objection to this action, whatever the motive, the writer is quite willing to be held to the text as read.]



## THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER



## THE CAPTURE OF FORT FISHER

BY

BREVET MAJOR GENERAL N. MARTIN CURTIS, U.S.V.

GENERAL GRANT, in the 19th Chapter of the 2d Volume of his Personal Memoirs, refers to Fort Fisher in the following words :

"Up to January, 1865, the enemy occupied Fort Fisher, at the mouth of Cape Fear River and below the City of Wilmington. This port was of immense importance to the Confederates, because it formed their principal inlet for blockade-runners, by means of which they brought in from abroad such supplies and munitions of war as they could not procure at home. It was equally important to us to get possession of it, not only because it was desirable to cut off their supplies so as to ensure a speedy termination of the war, but also because foreign governments, particularly the British government, were constantly threatening that unless ours could maintain the blockade off that coast they should cease to recognize any blockade. For these reasons I determined, with the concurrence of the Navy Department, in December, to send an expedition against Fort Fisher for the purpose of capturing it."

Thomas E. Taylor, an English merchant, one of the most active and successful blockade-runners during the war, says in his book, "Running the Blockade," page 139 :

"That morning (in Richmond, Va., December, 1864) I had an appointment with the Commissary General, who divulged to me under promise of secrecy that Lee's army was in terrible straits, and had in fact rations for only thirty days. He asked me if I could help him. I said I would do my best, and after some negotiations he undertook to pay me a profit of 350 per cent upon any provisions and meat I could bring in within the next three weeks. . . . Although it was a hard trip it paid well, as we had on board coming out a most magnificent cargo, a great deal of sea island cotton, the profits upon which and the provisions I had taken in amounted to over eighty-five thousand pounds — not bad work for about twenty days."

January 15th, 1865, the day of the capture of Fort Fisher, he wrote from Nassau to his chiefs in Liverpool, England : (p. 136, same vol.) :

"Altogether I think the Confederate government is going to the *bad*, and if they don't take care the Confederacy will go too. I never saw things look so gloomy, and I think spring will finish them unless they make a change for the better. Georgia is gone, and they say Sherman is going to seize Branchville; if he does Charleston and Wilmington will be done—and if Wilmington goes Lee has to evacuate Richmond and retire into Tennessee. He told me the other day that if they did not keep Wilmington they could not save Richmond. They nearly had Fort Fisher—they were within sixty yards of it—and had they pushed on as they ought to have done could have taken it. It was a terrific bombardment; they estimate that about 40,000 shells were sent into it. Colonel Lamb behaved like a brick—splendidly. I got the last of the Whitworths in, and they are now at the fort. They are very hard up for food in the field, but the *Banshee* has this time 600 barrels of pork and 1500 boxes of meat—enough to feed Lee's army for a month."

When Colonel Lamb took command of the fort, July 4th, 1862, he found it a quadrilateral work with six guns, flanked north and south by five detached batteries carrying eleven guns, four of which were casemated. Only one of the seventeen guns was of modern ordnance. He stated that the frigate *Minnesota* could have destroyed the works and driven them out in a few hours. During his occupation of the fort he made it the largest and best equipped fortification constructed by the Confederates, as shown in his description of it as it stood before the attack.

At the land-face of Fort Fisher, five miles from the intrenched camp at Sugar Loaf, the peninsula was about half a mile wide. This face commenced about a hundred feet from the river with a half bastion, and extended with a heavy curtain to a full bastion on the ocean side, where it joined the sea-face, without moat, scarp and counterscarp. The outer slope was twenty feet high from the berm to the top of the parapet, at an angle of 45°, and was sodded with marsh grass, which grew luxuriantly. The parapet was not less than twenty-five feet thick, with an inclination of only one foot. The revetment was five feet nine inches high from the floor of the gun-chambers, and these were some twelve feet or more from the interior plane. The guns were all mounted in barbette, on Columbiad carriages; there was not a single casemated gun in the fort.

Between the gun-chambers, containing one or two guns each (there were twenty heavy guns on the land-face) there were heavy traverses, exceeding in size any known to engineers, to protect from an enfilading fire. They extended out some twelve feet on the parapet and were twelve feet or more in height above the parapet running back thirty feet or more. The gun-chambers were reached from the rear by steps. In each traverse was an alternate magazine or bomb-proof, the latter ventilated by an air-chamber. Passageways penetrated the traverses in the interior of the work, forming additional bomb-proofs for the reliefs for the guns.

The sea-face for a hundred yards from the northeast bastion was of the same massive character as the land-face. A crescent battery intended for four guns adjoined this. A series of batteries extended for three-quarters of a mile along the sea, connected by an infantry curtain. These batteries had heavy traverses ten or twelve feet high above the top of the parapets. On this line was a bomb-proof electric battery connected with a system of submarine torpedoes. Farther along a mound battery sixty feet high was erected, with two heavy guns, which had a plunging fire on the channel; this was connected with the battery north of it by a light curtain. Following the line of the works it was one mile from the angle of the sea and land faces to the mound, and upon this line twenty-four heavy guns were mounted. From the mound for nearly a mile to the end of the point was a level sand plain scarcely three feet above high tide, and much of it was submerged during gales. At this point was Battery Buchanan, of four guns, in the shape of an ellipse, commanding the inlet, its two 11-inch guns covering the approach by land. An advanced redoubt with a 24-pounder was added after the first expedition. A wharf for large steamers was in close proximity to these works. As a defence against infantry there was a system of sub-terra torpedoes extending across the peninsula, five to six hundred feet from the land-face, and so disconnected that the explosion of one would not affect the others; inside the torpedoes,



about fifty feet from the berm of the work, extending from river bank to sea-shore, was a heavy palisade of sharpened logs nine feet high, pierced for musketry. There was a redoubt guarding the sally-port, from which two Napoleons were run out, as occasion required. At the river end of the palisade was a deep and muddy slough, across which was a bridge, over which the river road entered the fort. Commanding this bridge was a Napoleon gun. There were three mortars in rear of the land-face.

Colonel Lamb says :

"Fort Fisher commanded the last gateway between the Confederate States and the outside world. Its capture with the resulting loss of all the Cape Fear River defences, and of Wilmington, the great importing depot of the South, effectually ended all blockade running. Lee sent me word that Fort Fisher must be held or he could not subsist his army."

General Butler reported at 8 P.M., December 27th, to General Grant, his return to Fortress Monroe, briefly stating the operations of the men under his command, and his reasons for withdrawing his forces. He stated that all but about three hundred were re-embarked before he left the North Carolina coast, and that he had no doubt they were all safely off by that time. He also said that he would go up to see General Grant the next morning.

The transports returning with the troops (excepting one on which was about one-quarter of Curtis's brigade, which did not return until after the second expedition sailed) passed the capes and anchored in Hampton Roads early in the morning of December 29th, and returned to their camps near the New Market Road on the 30th of December.

In the interval between the return of the first expedition and the departure of the second, General Grant was in correspondence with the President, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy and Admiral Porter, in reference to the failure of the first expedition, and the preparation going forward to renew the attack upon Fort Fisher.

On January 2nd General Grant requested General Butler to send Major General Terry to him at City Point, and the same

day issued Special Orders No. 2, Headquarters Armies of the United States, directing eight thousand infantry, two batteries of artillery without horses, with four days' cooked rations in haversacks, to be got in immediate readiness to embark on transports, with orders to report to Major General W. T. Sherman, at Savannah, Ga. ; that the troops and artillery of the late expedition against Wilmington, being experienced in embarking and debarking, should be selected, and to make up the balance of the eight thousand, good and tried soldiers of the Second Brigade, First Division, Twenty-fourth Army Corps, should be taken. Brevet Major General A. H. Terry, U. S. Vols., was assigned to the command of these forces, and directed that every practicable precaution should be observed to prevent information of any movement of troops getting to the enemy.


On January 2nd General Grant gave General Terry written instructions to renew the attack on Fort Fisher, with details for his co-operation with Admiral Porter.

On January 4th Lieutenant Colonel C. B. Comstock, Aide-de-camp, was directed to report to General Terry, and accompany him as chief engineer of the expedition under his command.

January 4th, on receipt of a letter from Admiral Porter, General Grant gave General Terry additional instructions governing his action after joining Admiral Porter's fleet. When the troops went down the James River, General Grant accompanied General Terry to Fortress Monroe, and gave such verbal instructions as he deemed necessary.

January 4th, 1865, five days after returning from the first expedition, the First Brigade broke camp, marched in a heavy snow-storm to Bermuda Landing, and bivouacked for the night.

The next morning, General Adelbert Ames, commanding Second Division, Twenty-fourth Army Corps, directed me to embark my brigade on two river steamers, proceed to Hampton Roads, transfer my command to the steamship *Atlantic* and to reserve rooms on board the ship for himself and staff ; and he especially directed that neither myself nor any member of



my command should leave the ship after boarding it. The trip down the James River, and the transfer of the troops to the *Atlantic* were made before sundown. Before dark all the division officers, except General Ames and his aide, Captain Henry C. Lockwood, came on board, and reported that General Ames and Captain Lockwood would soon join us. Two rooms had been reserved for General Ames, and one for each of his staff.

About nine o'clock in the evening information reached us that Ames's division, Twenty-fourth Army Corps, Paine's division, Twenty-fifth Corps (Colored), J. C. Abbott's Second Brigade, First Division, Twenty-fourth Army Corps, and two batteries of artillery were on transports in Hampton Roads.

At five minutes after twelve o'clock that night Captain Algernon E. Smith, 117th New York, aide to General A. H. Terry, brought to my state-room a sealed envelope addressed "To the Senior Officer on Board the *Atlantic*," and asked me to take and receipt for it. This I declined to do, informing him that General Ames was the senior officer on board, and the proper person to receive it. He left, but soon returned with one of the division staff, who reported that General Ames was not at that time on board. I then receipted for the despatch, and after reading it to the division staff officer, requested him to acquaint General Ames with its contents as soon as he could do so. The orders addressed "To the Senior Officer on Board the *Atlantic*" and the sealed orders addressed "To be opened off Cape Henry," read as follows :

GENERAL ORDERS, }  
No. 2. }

HEADQUARTERS EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,  
*January 5, 1865.*

The vessels containing the troops of this expedition will leave Hampton Roads precisely at 4 A.M. to-morrow. As far as possible the vessels containing the troops of each division will keep together, and the whole fleet will follow the flagship, which will carry red, white, and green lights at the masthead. They will pass out between the capes, and when off Cape Henry the sealed orders which are furnished to the commanding officer on each transport will be opened. The speed of the transports will be as nearly as possible eight knots per hour.

By order of Bvt. Maj. Gen. A. H. TERRY :  
A. TERRY, Captain, and Assistant Adjutant General."

## HEADQUARTERS EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,

*January 5, 1865.*

## SEALED ORDERS,

COMMANDING OFFICER OF TROOPS,

On Board of U. S. Transport Atlantic :

SIR :


The transport fleet will rendezvous twenty-five miles off Beaufort, N.C. You will immediately proceed to that point and report to the senior officer of the expedition present at the time of your arrival.

You will then await further orders.

By order of Bvt. Maj. Gen. A. H. TERRY :

A. TERRY, Captain, and Assistant Adjutant General.

I sent word to Captain Gray, commanding the ship to weigh anchor and be ready to sail at four o'clock in the morning. I went on deck at 3 A.M., and found the men weighing anchor ; but the ship waited for its position in the line until after daylight, and then passed out between the capes. While sailing out breakfast was served to the officers in the cabin. Before taking seats at the table I requested Captain Charles A. Carleton, acting assistant adjutant general on division staff, to invite General Ames to join us. He replied, "General Ames did not come on board until late, and will not breakfast for several hours." Before the officers left the table Captain Gray was called on deck. He soon returned and reported that the ship was off Cape Henry, and asked for further orders. I handed to Captain Carleton the sailing orders, as well as the sealed orders, "To be opened when off Cape Henry," and requested him to give them to General Ames. At first Captain Carleton declined to do so, saying he did not wish to disturb General Ames, and said that I should open the envelope and attend to all matters of detail while on shipboard, as Colonel Bell had done on the first expedition. I replied that I should not assume any of the duties of the division commander until directed by him to do so, and that if he declined to take the orders to General Ames I would send one of my own staff. Thereupon Captain Carleton took the orders to the state-room in which General Ames's baggage had been placed, but soon returned to the cabin and reported that General Ames was not on board the ship.



During the second day after the arrival of the division at the rendezvous off Beaufort, N. C., General Ames and his personal aide, Captain Lockwood, came on board the *Atlantic* from a hospital ship which had sailed from Fortress Monroe the day following the departure of the expedition. General Ames then charged General Curtis with "sailing with his division for the purpose of commanding it," and used offensive words, which were promptly resented and their retraction demanded. Following this unhappy and uncalled for incident the intercourse between these officers was limited to the strictest requirements of official duty.

After the sailing of the troops above mentioned, Brevet Brigadier General H. L. Abbott sailed from Fortress Monroe, on the 7th of January, with a siege train of twenty 30-pounder and four 100-pounder Parrott guns, twenty Coehorn mortars, three companies of the 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery, and two companies of the 15th New York Engineers. This additional force joined us at the rendezvous one day before the landing.

Early on the morning of Friday, January 13th, the vessels of Admiral Porter's squadron moved into position before Fort Fisher and opened a vigorous bombardment of the fort, which continued without cessation until its capture. About eight o'clock A.M. a division of light draught naval vessels was detached from the squadron to cover the landing of the troops, which was completed at three o'clock in the afternoon, together with extra rations, ammunition and intrenching tools. The landing was made through a heavy surf in which officers, men, provisions in haversacks, and ammunition in boxes were thoroughly soaked.

A line established across the peninsula in the early morning was soon abandoned for a second line, a mile farther south, on which breastworks extending from the beach to the Cape Fear River were thrown up during the night and completed at eight o'clock the next morning, when the troops of General Ames's division were withdrawn from the line. General Paine's divis-

ion and Abbott's brigade (under command of General Paine) were left to defend it if attacked by the enemy, then in large force at Sugar Loaf, two and a half miles north. The maintaining of this line was of vital importance—a failure to do so would have caused the withdrawal of troops from before the fort, to reinforce the line. General Terry was justified, in view of the past services of the troops under Generals Paine and Abbott, in leaving it in their charge. The regiments of Abbott's brigade were first organized under General Terry, and he always fondly referred to it as "his old brigade." They were prepared to make a stubborn defence, but the mildness of General Bragg's demonstrations did not rise to the dignity of an attack at any time. Not only did he not, throughout the day, force back the line; his fire did not wound a single Union soldier.

For the third time since he rejoined the expedition, General Ames now requested General Terry to promise that he would not designate General Curtis for any special duty, and, failing to obtain assurance that his request would be complied with, stated to General Terry that he would not be responsible for the success of any movement with which General Curtis was charged. Thereupon General Terry answered: "I have known General Curtis for nearly two years, and have perfect confidence in his ability and fidelity. I will relieve him from your command, and direct him to report to me for orders." Immediately after this General Terry informed me that from that time I should receive all orders from him direct. A brief statement of this incident is made to give a better understanding of subsequent events.

Soon after being relieved from General Ames's command my brigade accompanied General Terry and Colonel Comstock, Aide to General Grant, to Battery Holland, below Craig's Landing, where a small steamer, loaded with forage and ammunition, was captured. While marching down a shell from the rebel gunboat *Chickamauga*, lying in the Cape Fear River, ex-

ploded near the head of the column, seriously wounding Captain J. H. Reeve, commanding the 3rd New York, and three men of the brigade.

A skirmish line was sent forward from Battery Holland, under cover of which General Terry, Colonel Comstock and myself went along the sand dunes near the river to within six hundred yards of the fort. After completing his observations General Terry asked, "Do you think the fort can be successfully assaulted with the force I can spare from the line established last night, the holding of which is of the first importance?" I replied that I believed the three brigades already withdrawn from the line could carry the fort by an assault if the dispositions were properly made, and if the Navy should support the troops from start to finish. He said, "It has been definitely determined that in case an assault is made you will make it. I will see Admiral Porter this evening, and we will then decide what course to pursue."

General Terry directed me to remain near the fort if I could do so safely, or to retire to the reserves near the breastworks thrown up the night before, where he could be found to receive reports of any incidents which I might think it important for him to know. He then returned, with Colonel Comstock, to the reserves.

From a sand dune on the right of my skirmish line I took a survey of the ground in front of the parapet, and determined to throw up breastworks to protect the assaulting party. On account of the conformation I decided to construct these lines at an angle to the curtain, the left flanks to be fifty yards nearer the fort than the right flanks. There was marshy ground in front of the west half of the parapet, but I preferred to march through it rather than go to the eastward over dry ground, although the west end of the parapet was higher than the east end, as the low ground in front made it easier to get under the plane of fire than at the east end, where the surface was higher, and served as a natural glacis. Because of this, when the

assault finally came to be made, the naval column was kept under fire longer than were the troops assaulting on the left end of the parapet.

As soon as it was dark a skirmish line was deployed at five paces, the front rank carrying muskets, the rear shovels, and advanced to the place selected for the first line. Here the men in the rear line proceeded to throw up enough sand to protect a man lying on his face, while the line with muskets advanced twenty paces beyond the men with shovels. In the drift sand the work was quickly done. Then the man with the shovel went forward and gave it to the picket, from whom he took his musket and marched forward twenty paces, while the former picket threw up the sand where he stood; and so the lines went forward, each man exchanging gun for shovel. In this manner four lines of breastworks were laid out, the last being under the plane of fire. Details were made to connect these "Gopher Holes," as the men called them, thus making continuous lines. About one hundred and seventy-five yards from the parapet a higher and heavier breastwork was thrown up to protect a party of sharpshooters; and forty men, selected on account of their skill as marksmen, were immediately sent to occupy it. They had orders to remain until the next night, or until an assault should be made, in which case they were instructed to join the first line and go to the fort. In the meantime they were to prevent the loading of the Columbiads on the parapet. The work was completed before dawn, and the tired troops of the First Brigade turned in for a well-earned rest. Many of those who slept on the sands of Federal Point the night preceding the battle of January 15th, friends and foes alike, will, from causes incident to the service, remember that night, with all its disagreeable features, as one which afforded them sweeter and more restful slumber than they have since obtained on the softest couch.

On the morning of the 15th General Terry, with Colonel Comstock, came to Battery Holland, and informed me that it



had been agreed between Admiral Porter and himself that the three brigades of the Second Division should attack the west end of the parapet, while sixteen hundred sailors and four hundred marines would attack the east end at three o'clock in the afternoon. He then asked, "What have you done or discovered during the night?" He was told about the rifle pits and their use when advancing on the fort, and the stationing of men under the plane of fire to keep the cannoneers from loading the Columbiads when the assaulting forces should take position preliminary to the final rush. He approved the work, and later sent forward sixty men of the 13th Indiana (Third Brigade) with repeating rifles, to join the sharpshooters. They went under command of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel M. Zent, and they performed most valuable service.

General Terry said to me, "You stated yesterday that an assault would be successful 'if the dispositions were properly made.' Your brigade is to lead, and I should like to know your views as to the formation." I replied that I wished to charge in line, brigade front, make successive advances from one rifle pit to the next, the final rush not to be made until we were as near the fort as we could get without drawing the infantry fire, and that our movements in this particular would be governed by the action of the enemy in coming to the parapet; that when his infantry came up we would wait behind our newly made rifle pits until the Navy pounded them down; when they were down we would go forward to the next line; when they came to the parapet again we would again lie down until they were driven back; and when they should refuse to leave the parapet we would make the final rush and get under the plane of fire before the enemy could deliver a second volley.

General Terry said, "Don't you want to strike them in column with a hammer-head?" I replied, "After I get under the plane of fire I will; but before that the thinner the line the better. The troops will be in column when they get to the parapet. The right regiment will go straight to the right of the

left salient, the three other regiments will oblique to the right and strike the fort at the same place, and so reduce the front to one-third of what it will be at the start. 'We will pass the stockade and mount the parapet, and if we cannot get in, send a brigade to push us in.' The subject was fully discussed, and after Colonel Comstock had given the plan his approval General Terry accepted it. He thus became responsible for the plan, and ordered its execution.

I said, "General Terry, the final rush will be made when you see me rise in the middle of the line and hear me call aloud. Soon after you will see the First Brigade go through the stockade and up the parapet ; then send Pennypacker's brigade." He replied, "With the men of your brigade on the parapet I shall feel certain of success. A lodgment there assures victory."

About noon General Ames came to the front with Bell's and Pennypacker's brigades, and halted them in rear of my brigade.

A little time before advancing to the line from which the start was to be made, a naval officer, Lieutenant Porter, I think, came to me and said, "General Terry informs me that your brigade is to lead in the assault, and I desire to be informed of your plans, so that the sailors and marines on the beach may move at the same time you do." I told him of the plans for a gradual approach, and that the final rush would be made when the garrison remained on the parapet, at which time the column on the beach should also start ; that I did not approve of the formation the Navy seemed inclined to make, and feared the result would not be satisfactory. He replied, "I am sorry Army officers find so much fault with the Navy. We are trying to help them on their own ground, and they ought to be satisfied." I answered, "You misunderstand me. We want you very much, both your guns on the ships and your men on the shore. I speak as a landsman about operations on land — I would not criticise nautical matters. Your men are too compactly formed — your front is too narrow for the depth of your



column. To go into action as your men are now formed places you under a great disadvantage. You should hold back your main body until your advanced line gets a foothold on the fort. If you go forward as you are you will be fearfully punished, and the only good your column will do us will be to receive the fire which otherwise would come to our lines. I fully understand the great advantage the troops will derive from this movement of the Navy, but hesitate to commend it when I think of the heavy loss they must sustain in making it in the formation you have adopted." The officer left, assuring me that the Navy would do its part and merit approval whether the Army gave it or not.

Two thousand men from the Navy, from sixty ships, unacquainted one with another or with the service they were to undertake, were brought together on the beach to perform a most hazardous work. The number of officers was small — entirely too few for the number of men engaged. As before stated, the force was too compact. The first line should have been longer and thinner, and the main body kept out of the fire until the first line had reached the fort. Such a plan requires good men — veterans; it is, however, the way to assault fortifications with the least loss of life, almost the only plan by which to achieve success.

Before advancing to the first line every officer and man had been instructed as to his movements and the order in which they would take place, and that the point of attack would be between the first and second traverses.

Just before the preliminary movements were begun Captain A. G. Lawrence, of General Ames's staff, came to me and asked if he could go with my brigade. I replied that he could if he would not interfere with its movements, and sent him to Lieutenant Colonel F. X. Meyer, commanding the 117th New York, at the right of the line. Captain Lawrence understood that I was not under the command of his chief, and that he could not accompany my brigade without my permission. He did not go

as the representative of another, nor did he make the slightest attempt to direct the movements of the men. He fell at the stockade, seriously wounded, the victim of a valor which he conspicuously exhibited in every battle in which he participated.

The preliminary advances were made in a succession of thin lines, number one of the first line going forward to a rifle pit, followed by number two; the rear rank advancing in the same manner. By this method only one-fourth of the line was exposed to the enemy's fire.

After the first advance Captain Keeler, of the division staff, who was near the right of my line, called out, "General Ames says the time for the assault has come." I replied, "I shall obey the orders of General Terry, who understands that the advance depends upon the fire of the Navy and its effect upon the garrison."

Three short advances were made. During each the garrison came to the parapet; when the line halted it returned to the bomb-proofs, each time remaining longer on the parapet and suffering greater damage from the naval fire. When the enemy seemed determined to remain on the parapet the final rush was made. I arose from the middle of the line and called out "Forward," advancing as I arose from the ground. Each officer and man had been instructed to advance as he got up, and to go forward in silence. Cheering was positively forbidden, the object being to keep the men from expending their wind needlessly, as it was all important to save it for the final rush up the parapet. We were fifteen paces to the front before we reached the usual height of a running man, which is about one-third less than the height when standing. The result of this movement was to cause the first volley to pass over our heads, doing but little damage. Had the order been given, "Attention, first battalion, guide right, second, third and fourth battalions oblique to the right," many in the line would have been shot down before a start was made.

The naval fire had made many openings in the stockade, but


not enough to allow speedy passage through it. One hundred axes which had been distributed in the brigade were vigorously used, under a galling fire, in making openings for the men. The first forty or fifty through the stockade climbed up the parapet and met the enemy between the first and second traverses. In this space there were two Columbiads, one disabled, the enemy loading the other. The charge had been sent home, but the ramrod not withdrawn, when we overpowered the gunners. The man at the breech put out his hand with a primer to discharge the piece, after his surrender had been demanded. A sharp blow from a sabre on his outstretched hand quickly dissuaded him, and the charge remained until the captors had leisure to withdraw it.

The first battle-flag to come up was a marker of the 117th New York, which was promptly placed on the second traverse. Its right to remain there was tested in a hand to hand contest with swords and bayonets, in which the Yankees won.

We then went down to the floor of the fort and secured the men serving a Napoleon gun at the gate, and a number of infantry posted at the stockade west of the gate. These men were sent to the rear without escort. Their capture removed the chief obstacle to an approach by the road. At this time the Second Brigade entered the fort, some through the gate, and others over the parapet. Just before returning to the parapet I saw General Ames advancing from the gate, through which he had apparently entered the fort. He requested Adjutant Roys, 117th New York, to take a number of prisoners then coming out of the left bomb-proof, to General Terry, with his compliments. I directed Adjutant Roys to return to the parapet, where he could be better employed than in escorting prisoners to the rear. He obeyed my order, and rendered most efficient service in the front line throughout the day. Upon reaching the parapet I found that a large number of my brigade had succeeded in getting through the stockade, and were advancing to the place first gotten possession of, where they were being rapidly joined by men of the Second Brigade.

At the time we made the grand rush for the left of the parapet, the naval column moved in mass upon the sea bastion. The enemy, believing this to be the main attack, turned upon them all the guns which could sweep the beach, and massed more than half of his infantry behind the right of the parapet to repel the attack. Colonel Lamb conducted this defence of the sea bastion in person. The enemy's fire upon the naval column was terribly effective, spreading death and disorder. Except a few, who reached the stockade, those not disabled soon retired.

General Whiting at this time occupied a position on the parapet midway between the sea bastion and the sally-port. The repulse of the naval column caused the troops under Colonel Lamb and General Whiting to cheer vigorously, the cheers being heard above the roar of the cannon ; but their exultation was short, for, upon looking to the west, they saw two U. S. flags on the left of the parapet, — their comrades unable to remove them. General Whiting hurried with the troops near him to the left of the line, and joined in the contest which we made for the third traverse. While in this hand to hand conflict he received a mortal wound, and was carried to a bomb-proof, whence he encouraged his men to continue the defence. Colonel Pennypacker, commanding the Second Brigade, was severely wounded while placing the colors of his regiment on this traverse, and Colonel Moore, 203rd Pennsylvania, was killed while advancing with the colors of his regiment to the same position. Lieut. Colonel Burney and Major Jones, 142nd New York, were wounded here, but soon after re-entered the contest. Here Captain Thomas, 117th New York, was killed. Lieut. Colonel Meyer and Major Bagg, 117th New York, although each wounded, and many officers of the Second Brigade whose names I cannot give, came to the front and joined in the contest until our possession of the traverse was undisputed. Our killed and wounded on the parapet impeded our advance to the fourth traverse so that we were scarcely able to go forward



without treading upon them. Colonel Lamb came forward with troops to meet us at the fourth traverse, bringing into action a larger number than we had met at the third. Our numbers were also increased by those who joined us as rapidly as they came into the fort. The struggle for this traverse was the hottest and most prolonged single contest of the day. The loss of life was great on both sides. The killed and wounded were set aside to make room for comrades who came impetuously forward to support their respective sides. In this contest Colonel Lamb was seriously wounded, and taken to the same bomb-proof occupied by General Whiting, from which place he directed his subordinates to make every resistance to our advance; but our success in this fearful struggle had turned the tide, their defence became less spirited and effective, and each succeeding traverse was taken with less difficulty.

The naval fire throughout the day had been delivered with singular accuracy, at the rate of two or three shells per second, in front of the assaulting forces; but at the fifth traverse a shot went wide of its mark and killed or disabled all but four men in our front line. Fearing that a slackening of our fire would invite a countercharge, I myself discharged the guns of the killed and disabled men until reinforcements were brought forward. A sudden emergency compelled this action. It was not done to encourage the soldiers—no theatrical efforts were needed to quicken their zeal. Men unable to stand and fire their pieces handed up the guns of their dead and helpless comrades, and when given back reloaded them again and again, exhibiting a frenzied zeal and unselfish devotion, that, seemingly, nothing but death could chill.

While we were capturing the traverses, others on the floor of the fort fought the enemy in bomb-proofs and behind obstructions near the parapet, keeping pace with us. Lieut. Colonel Lyman, 203rd Pennsylvania, was killed while actively urging this line forward. Several company officers were in this detachment, and vigorously conducted these operations after his death, among

them Captain William H. Walling, 142nd New York Volunteers, who, on the first expedition, had captured the garrison flag of Fort Fisher. Captain R. D. Morehouse, 142nd New York Volunteers, in charge of a party, captured a large number of Confederates in the sally-port, from which they had energetically opposed the advance of our forces on the floor of the fort ; but our progress on the parapet rendered their position untenable, and, by a skilful movement, he captured them before they could retire to other defences. His skill and bravery were as conspicuous then as his modest dignity is noticeable among his companions of the Legion. This capture was considered by the Confederates a dishonorable surrender. They did not know then that these men had been compelled to surrender, and had only put up a white flag when retreat was impossible. Major William J. Sanders reports this incident in the following language: "General Whiting, although wounded, was still directing, as far as possible, the movements of his small force, when Major Riley rushed in and reported the astonishing fact that an officer, having put his handkerchief on a ramrod whilst he was temporarily in another portion of his command, had surrendered three hundred of his men and admitted a regiment into the galleries of the sally-port on the land-face."

Progress was more easily and steadily made until we gained possession of the seventh traverse at 4.45 P.M., where it was found that our best marksmen could drive the gunners from the Columbiad on the sea bastion, with which gun the enemy had enfiladed the ditch and given the assailants more trouble than with any other piece in the fort. When it was discovered that this gun could be silenced, the project of marching up the ditch and capturing the sea bastion was decided upon, and men at the west end of the fort were summoned to undertake it. I sent Corporal Jones, of the color guard of the 117th New York, to the west end of the fort to bring men forward. He came back, and stated that General Ames directed him to return and say that men could not be sent, but spades to fortify would be

furnished. My orderly, A. D. Knight, was next sent to obtain men, and directed to state the object of the movement to be made. He soon returned, and stated that General Ames had ordered him to say that the men were exhausted, and no further advance would be attempted until reinforcements arrived in the morning; that we should hold the ground occupied, if possible, and that intrenching tools would be sent to us. I directed Orderly Knight to go back and request officers under my rank to collect men and bring them forward, so that the attack could be made before dark; to say that the resistance of the enemy was less than at the beginning of the battle, and that the capture of the bastion would compel an early surrender. Knight soon returned with an armful of spades which General Ames had ordered him to carry to me that I might fortify and hold our position until fresh troops came into the fort. I threw the spades over the traverse to the Confederates. Being convinced that General Ames intended to suspend operations until reinforcements came in, I directed Silas W. Kempton, Mate U. S. Navy, who reported to me early in the engagement and volunteered to serve in whatever capacity he might be useful, to go, for the second time, to General Terry, to urge him to have the troops then engaged in throwing up fortifications in rear of the left end of the parapet to join in a general advance, and take possession of the fort before reinforcements could be sent in to the enemy. I instructed him to state that the enemy were offering slight resistance, and that a bold push would secure a victory already substantially won. This young sailor had been previously sent to General Terry, after we had won possession of the fourth traverse, to ask him to have the naval fire in front of our advancing lines increased, if possible, and to have the fuses cut shorter, so as to cause the explosion of the shells nearer the parapet. Many passed beyond the fort, and were lost by exploding in the marsh and river. The zeal and intelligence of Mr. Kempton commanded my warmest admiration.

I then directed Captain David B. Magill, 117th New York, to take the next traverse with the first men who should come up, and went to the west end of the parapet and to the floor of the fort in rear of it, to obtain men to march up the ditch to the sea bastion. While collecting them on the floor of the fort in rear of the first and second traverses, General Ames addressed me, for the first time since the movement on the fort had begun, and said, "I have two or three times sent you word to fortify your position and hold it until reinforcements can be sent to aid us; the men are exhausted, and I will not order them to go forward." I directed his attention to two steamboats in the Cape Fear River, loaded with Confederate troops, waiting for darkness to enable them to land, which they could not do while it was light, because of the naval fire, and said, "Should they succeed in landing they may be able to drive us out; therefore, the fort should be captured before fresh troops come to the enemy." I informed him that the garrison was resisting with less spirit than earlier in the day, and asserted that complete victory was within our grasp if we aroused ourselves and pushed the advantage we surely had, and that I intended to conduct the movement up the ditch to the sea bastion if I could get but fifty men. Several said, "We will go." At this time the sun was just disappearing, at 5.15 $\frac{3}{10}$  P.M., —as stated by the Navy Department, two hours and five minutes from the opening of the battle.

While the volunteers were assembling I went further into the fort and had ascended a magazine or sand dune for the purpose of looking into the angle of the bastion I intended to attack, when I was struck and disabled by two fragments of a shell, one destroying the left eye, and the other carrying away a portion of the bone at the base of the brain. I was unconscious for several hours.

From official and other trustworthy sources it is shown that after sundown no special efforts were made to advance our lines, except the capture of an additional traverse by the troops

left under command of Captain Magill when I started out to collect men to go up the ditch. About 8 o'clock a regiment of colored troops from General Paine's line was sent to General Ames to assist in taking possession of the fort. He directed them to stack arms outside the fort and join the men in the rear of the left end of the parapet in throwing up breastworks to protect the assailants from a counter-charge by the garrison. Late in the afternoon the sailors and marines were withdrawn from the beach and sent to relieve Abbott's brigade, which was immediately sent down to the fort. The 3rd New Hampshire was placed on the right of Abbott's brigade, and when Captain Trickey, in command of it, was directed by General Abbott to take the traverse on that part of the parapet where the greatest resistance was expected to be made, the captain called his attention to the fact that he had less than eighty men in his command, and that a greater number might be needed to carry the traverses. General Abbott informed him he would be supported, and that his regiment was specially named to him by General Terry for that duty. The fact that the regiment was armed with repeating rifles may have influenced General Terry in making the selection. The order for the placing of the 3rd New Hampshire in Abbott's brigade, as stated to me by its commander, shows that General Terry kept in close touch with the several brigades, and gave personal attention to their movements throughout the battle. When Abbott's brigade reached the unoccupied portion of the parapet the enemy received it with a volley, but not heavy enough to check its progress. It marched over the parapet, across the floor of the fort, parallel to the sea-face, and southward to Battery Buchanan, where the garrison of Fort Fisher was found, unarmed and demoralized. These operations of Abbott's brigade were successfully carried out with the loss of four men killed and twenty-three wounded.

As soon as it was dark General Whiting and Colonel Lamb had been carried to Battery Buchanan, the former mortally and the latter seriously wounded. It was proposed to send them

across the river in small boats, as many had been, but they determined to remain and share the fate of the garrison.

The troops entered the fort without hesitation, and vied one with another, officers and men alike, for possession of the work. The loss in the early part of the engagement of Colonel Bell, commanding Third Brigade, and Colonel Smith, 112th New York, both mortally wounded before reaching the work, and of Colonel Moore, killed soon after mounting the parapet, was sorely felt throughout the day. They were soldiers of marked ability, veterans who had won distinction in every campaign in which the army to which they belonged had been engaged. Colonel Pennypacker, commanding Second Brigade, was seriously wounded while placing the colors of his regiment on the third traverse. This distinguished officer had put his brigade into position and given it an impulse which continued throughout the day. The loss of no officer could have been greater. At the end of the first hour few officers could have been found not disabled or bearing wounds that would have justified their retirement from an ordinary engagement, and a suspension of hostilities would have followed had not the troops been of the highest grade. Nine-tenths of them were veterans who had served in the campaigns in Virginia and the Carolinas, and had fought in every battle from Cold Harbor to the last battle in the campaign before Petersburg and Richmond. There was not an officer or man in the division who did not merit the highest commendation for unyielding persistency, courage, and devotion.

While the First and Second Brigades were the first to enter the fort, and contended together without distinction for possession of the parapet, it is not the intention to claim that one brigade was superior. Circumstances to a large degree, no doubt, influenced the selection as to the order in which the troops attacked the fort. The First Brigade had been near it on the first expedition, had taken its flag and a battalion of prisoners, and thoroughly believed that it could have been captured then. The knowledge of this fact undoubtedly had

much weight in influencing the commanding general to select that brigade to lead the assaulting forces. Each brigade took the position assigned to it, and performed its duties in a most courageous and efficient manner.

The crisis was passed soon after four o'clock, and success assured when the First and Second Brigades had mounted the parapet and demonstrated their ability not only to hold their ground, but to make steady progress from traverse to traverse. Had Ames and Curtis both been killed or disabled at the time Pennypacker was wounded, the battle would have proceeded successfully under the command of field and company officers. When the battle was well begun skill and generalship consisted in physical blows, and to every one who struck them honor is due.

Admiral Porter wanted success no less than General Terry, and was ready to take any steps in the line of his profession to win it. He knew, as all did, that a naval column would divert the garrison, and asked the navy to furnish men to form it. In pursuit of victory desperate chances are often taken. Never did men undertake a more difficult or hazardous task, and never did men offer themselves in their country's service with more zeal, courage or unselfish devotion than did the officers and men of the Navy, and the Marines, on the beach at Fort Fisher. Their action contributed to the progress of the army — whether the gain justified the losses we shall never know. The naval column was important as a diversion, but its value was slight in comparison with the fire of the six hundred guns trained on the fort. The fleet maintained an uninterrupted fire for two days, exceeding in effectiveness any bombardment recorded in the annals of war. To Admiral Porter's fleet the army was indebted for an uncontested landing, for an uninterrupted approach to within charging distance of the fort, and to its well directed fire in front of the assaulting forces, for a success which, without the Navy's aid, would have been impossible.

It will not be out of place to refer to the enemy and their defence of the fort.

The constant fire of the Navy for two days deprived the garrison of opportunity to rest or prepare food. While they suffered but little from this fire until brought out of their bomb-proofs to contest the advance of the assaulting forces, they then came under the hottest fire men ever encountered. Colonel Lamb skillfully conducted the defence, aided by General Whiting, who had volunteered his services on entering the fort. They protected their men until the decisive moment, and then led them with conspicuous gallantry.

The left of the parapet was in charge of a junior officer whose mistake, that of a moment only, was in failing to mount the parapet and contest our advance from the ditch. The men serving the piece of artillery covering the road, west of the parapet, were so intent in performing their duty that they were unconscious of our approach until ordered to surrender by men of the 117th New York, who went down from the parapet after capturing the second traverse.

General Bragg, in his report on the capture of the fort, says of our assaulting line :

"His army column, preceded by a single regiment, approached along the river and entered the work on that flank almost unopposed."

This does a great injustice to the men guarding the road. In fact they made it fatal to approach by the road ; and not until their capture, in active defence of the work, was the road made a safer line of approach than over the parapet. The Confederate garrison of Fort Fisher might well resent this aspersion on their most stubborn defence, and justly complain of the indifference of General Bragg, who had six thousand men within striking distance of our defensive line — more than twice the number of men holding the line — in not vigorously attacking it. General Bragg reported to General Lee "That at 4 P.M., when the enemy's infantry advanced to the assault, our troops were making a heavy demonstration against the enemy's rear." Although he expended a large amount of ammunition in making

this so-called "heavy demonstration," nevertheless General Paine's line was maintained without the loss or injury of a single Union soldier.

I have said that the enemy plainly showed signs of weakening before 5 P.M., and that full possession of the fort only awaited the advance of the Federal troops. This statement is supported by the reports of Confederate officers.

In his report General Whiting says :

"The fall both of the general and the colonel commanding the fort, one about 4 and the other about 4.30 P.M., had a perceptible effect upon the men, and no doubt hastened greatly the result ; but we were overpowered, and no skill or gallantry could have saved the place, after he effected a lodgment, except attack in the rear."

General Colquitt, who had been ordered, late in the afternoon, to take command of the fort, reported to General Bragg the condition of affairs he found on landing on Federal Point between 9 and 10 P.M.

"We landed, therefore, four hundred or five hundred yards from Battery Buchanan, between the Battery and Fort Fisher. I was not hailed, and did not see a sentinel or picket. A short distance from the point of landing I saw a shanty with several negroes and one or two white men in it. They reported that Fisher was taken, which, as I distrusted, I required one of them to come out and go with me as guide. I was about starting when an officer, representing himself as Captain Munn, with a dozen or fifteen men, without arms, came up. These I took for a fatigue detail, until the captain informed me the fort was evacuated ; that he had just come from it, and that General Whiting and Colonel Lamb were already at Battery Buchanan. . . . Meeting an officer, he said he would carry me to Colonel Lamb, who was wounded. I found the colonel prostrate with a wound, which he thought, however, was not severe. In answer to my inquiry whether anything more could be done, he replied that a fresh brigade might then retake the fort. I told

him there was no brigade with me, and wished to know of him the condition of the men who had escaped. He said that when he was wounded everything broke up in consternation and was utterly disorganized, and that no further efforts could effect anything with the resources available."

Lieutenant Hugh H. Colquitt, who accompanied General Colquitt to Battery Buchanan, in his report says :

"I asked an officer, the coolest man I saw, at what hour the enemy got into the fort. He replied, about two hours by the sun. 'What in the world have you been doing since?' This he answered by stating that he had been fighting in the fort ever since, until dark, when the garrison commenced leaving, and he presumed all had left by that time. . . . All our men were in a state of panic and demoralization ; no organization, no guns, nothing but confusion and dismay."

"The Abstract From Return of the Expeditionary Forces, Bvt. Maj. Gen. Alfred H. Terry, U. S. Army, commanding, for January 10, 1865," gives the aggregate of the four brigades engaged in reducing the fort, five days before the assault, to have been two hundred and fifty-seven officers and five thousand one hundred and seventy-two men. Of this number probably thirty-seven hundred took part in the assault, and at 9 o'clock P.M. thirteen hundred men under Abbott and three hundred colored troops entered the fort substantially unopposed, to secure a victory actually won four hours before. There are no records in the War Department giving the number of officers and men in the brigades commanded respectively by Curtis, Pennypacker and Bell, or the number of men taken into action. It is estimated that the First (Curtis') Brigade numbered nine hundred officers and men ; the Second (Pennypacker's), seventeen hundred officers and men ; the Third (Bell's), eleven hundred officers and men ; Abbott's Second Brigade, thirteen hundred officers and men.

The return of the casualties indicates the actual resistance met by the several brigades, which I give in the order they re-

spectively entered the fort. Curtis' brigade, two officers and thirty-seven men killed; eighteen officers and one hundred and sixty-six men wounded; five missing. 25.33 per cent. Penny-packer's brigade, six officers and forty-five men killed; six officers and two hundred and eleven men wounded; two missing. 16.47 per cent. Bell's brigade, two officers and fourteen men killed; six officers and ninety-one men wounded; two missing. 10.04 per cent. Abbott's brigade, four men killed; two officers and twenty-one men wounded; four missing. 2.33 per cent. The missing includes those injured beyond recognition, and those buried in the sand by the explosion of a magazine after the capture.

In bestowing honors for the victory at Fort Fisher we should prominently mention the Secretary of the Navy, and the officers and men of the North Atlantic blockading squadron, who, for three years, had continually urged the sending of an army force to join the navy in an expedition to reduce the defences at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Nor should we neglect prominently to associate General Grant with its capture. He organized the military force, and in spite of the first failure adhered to his purpose with unyielding persistency until the end was accomplished. The skill and labors of Admiral Porter and General Terry were fully acknowledged by the Administration and Congress, which all serving under them heartily approve.

Whatever may be the opinion of military men as to the wisdom of employing troops in throwing up breastworks inside the fort—a greater number of men than were engaged with the enemy in close action on the parapet and the floor of the fort near the parapet—instead of sending them across the floor of the fort to the sea-face, which movement would have ended the contest an hour before sunset, certain it is all will acknowledge that General Ames, under whose directions these engineering operations were carried on, bore himself with coolness and courage, as he did in his first battle, when he won a Congressional Medal of Honor for personal bravery.

The services of the gentlemen who went on both expeditions in an advisory capacity, although on the first the most important action — the withdrawal of the troops from the beach — was determined upon without his opinion being asked, were briefly stated by General Terry :

“To Bvt. Brig. Gen. C. B. Comstock, Aide-de-Camp on the staff of the Lieutenant General, I am under the deepest obligations. At every step of our progress I received from him the most valuable assistance. For the final success of our part of the operations the country is more indebted to him than to me.”

It would be unjust, as it would be ungenerous, to withhold from the field and company officers the warmest praise for their watchfulness in detecting every advantage afforded by the enemy, for their irresistible impetuosity and valor, which overcame obstacles as great as human skill and stubborn devotion could create, or to fail to gratefully acknowledge the services of the men in the ranks. Their steadiness, fortitude and bravery were surpassed by no one exercising command over them. Certainly our great commander did not neglect to commend every member of the military force composing the expedition, irrespective of rank or grade, in one of the most extraordinary documents ever filed with the archives of the War Department, wherein he recommended their commander for a high position in the regular army, based solely on their services, and independent of the promotions given to Terry, Ames, Pennypacker and Curtis in acknowledgment of their personal services.

CITY POINT, VA., *January 17, 1865.*

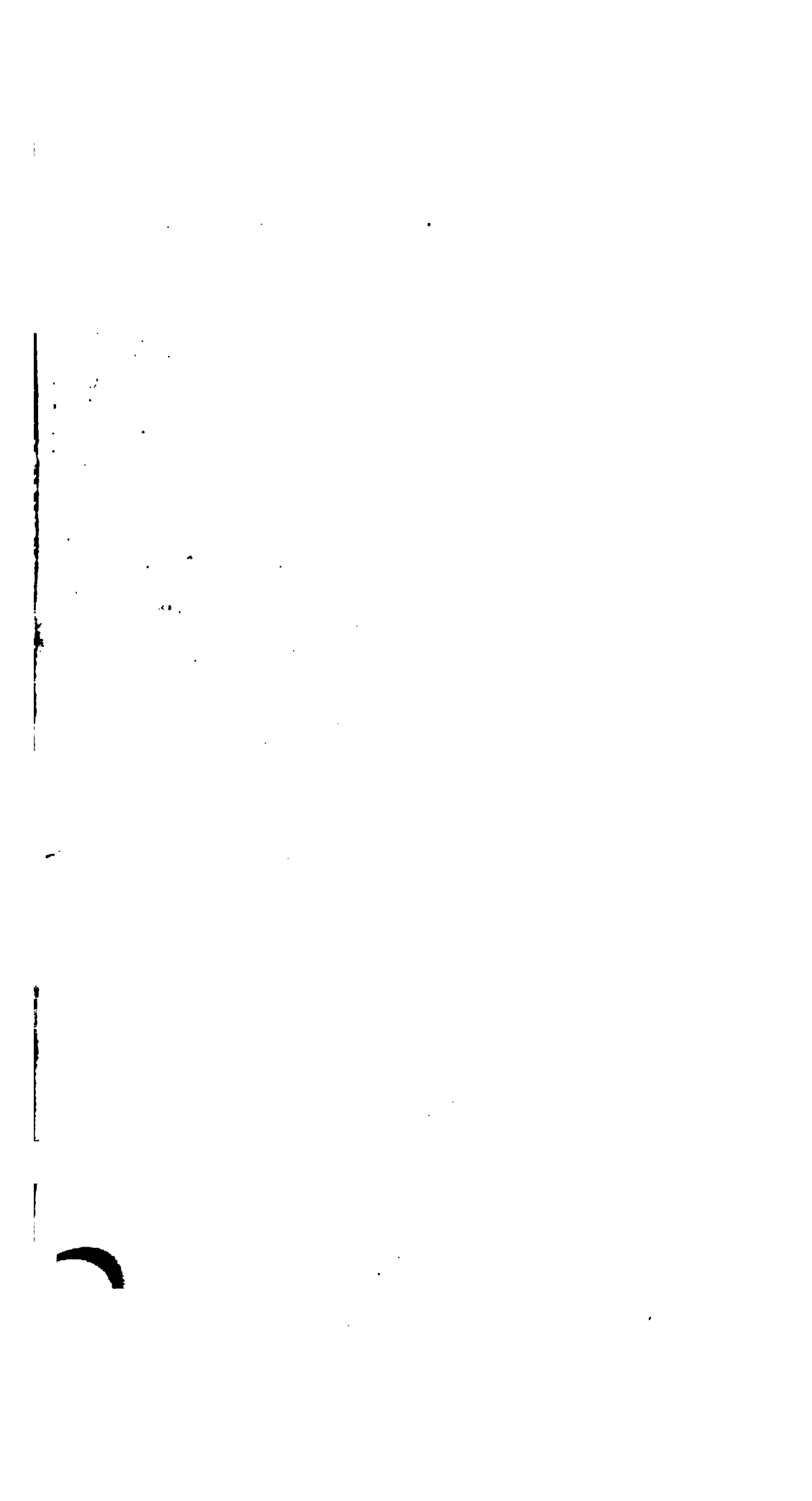
HON. E. M. STANTON,  
*Secretary of War.*

As a substantial recognition of the bravery of both officers and men in the capture of Fort Fisher, and the important service thereby rendered to their country, I do most respectfully recommend Bvt. Maj. Gen. Alfred H. Terry, U. S. Volunteers, their commanding officer, for appointment as Brigadier General in the Regular Army.

U. S. GRANT,  
*Lieutenant General.*









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